

Chess Canada

Gnome



Chess Canada

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subscriptions

CCN is distributed by email to CFC members who have submitted their email address to the CFC:

admin@chess.ca

submissions

CCN is looking for contributions: tournament reports, photos, annotated games. For examples, see this issue or read the 2013.06 Appendix for other ideas.

suggestions

If you have an idea for a story you would like to write, email me:

cfc_newsletter_editor@chess.ca

- John Upper
editor CCN

Chess Canada Gnome

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Cover: Gnome

Icelandic Dimmuborgir lava field troll +
Hambleton beard

Annotations by...

GM Eric Hansen
GM Bator Sambuev
IM Aman Hambleton
FM John Doknjas

Next...

- **IM David Cummings**
"The Englishman"
- **IM Micheal Kleinman**
beyond Reykjavik

Chess Canada
Gnome





editor's note

Chess Canada Gnome contains 29 annotated games, including annotations from:

- GM Eric Hansen (3)
- GM Bator Sambuev (2)
- IM Aman Hambleton (5)
- FM John Doknjas (2)
- Joey Qin (1)
- Joshua Doknjas (1)

"Gnome" refers to Iceland, where many of this issue's games were played.

The next issues include interviews with recent Canadian chess book authors: IM David Cummings (*The English*) and IM Michael Song (*The Chess Attacker's Handbook*), as well as reviews of both books; and notable Canadians in online chess, including interviews with the ChessBrahs (Eric and Aman) and HelmsKnight (one of the world's best bughouse players).

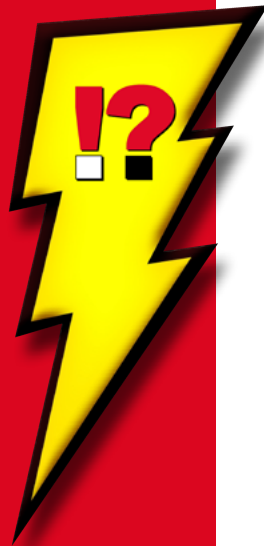
The notice at the right is a happy inclusion for this issue, as David Cohen has been a long-time contributor to Canadian Chess, including Canadian Chess Hall of Fame, and Player of the Year. Congrats!

Cohen Wedding

Lisette Lu, MLT and David Cohen, MPPM, IA, AIM were married Monday, May 14, 2018 by a bishop at Toronto City Hall.

Thanks to friends and witnesses Chris Hui and Dani Roloson; friend and photographer Peter Holt; and Dr. Gryfe for David's day pass from Mount Sinai Hospital.





Critical Positions



selected by the editor

4

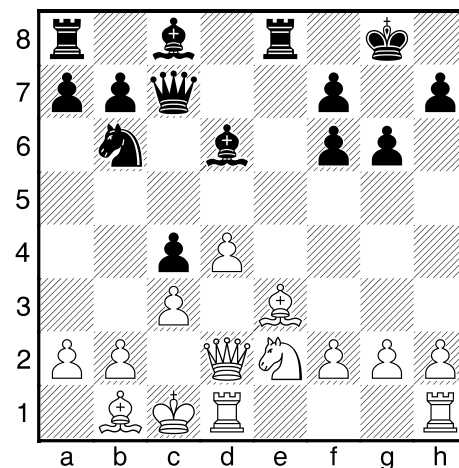
The following diagrams are critical positions from this issue of *Chess Canada*. You can treat them as exercises or as a teaser introduction to what you'll find this month.

These "critical positions" can be:

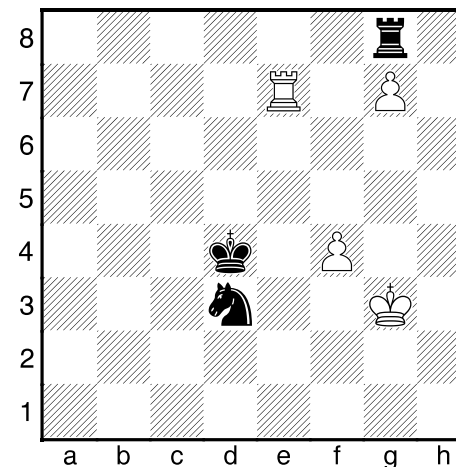
- winning combinations
- simple calculation exercises
- surprising tactics
- endgames requiring precise play
- variation-rich middlegames
- moments when one player went badly wrong.

The  and  squares next to each diagram indicate the player to move.

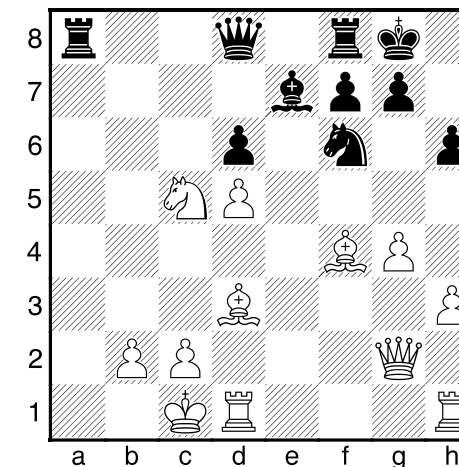
Solutions appear in the game analysis in this month's CCN, *in the red diagrams* in the reports named under the diagram. Critical positions usually feature significantly more analytical commentary than the rest of the game.



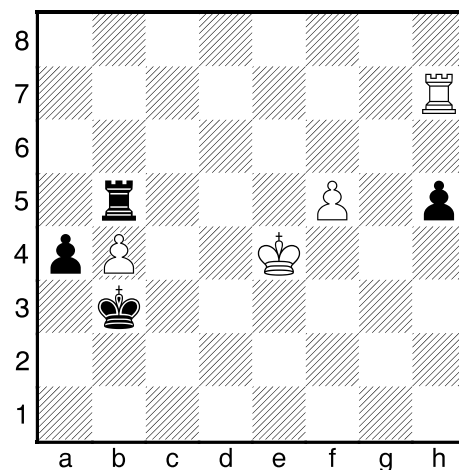
See: Hansen



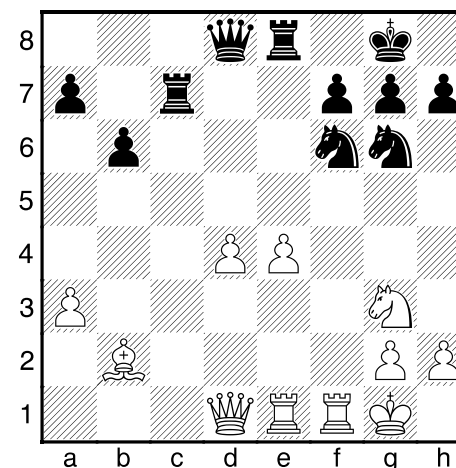
See: Reykjavik



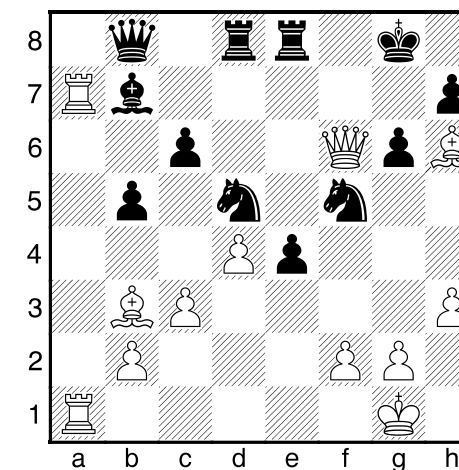
Recapture or check first?
See: On the Road



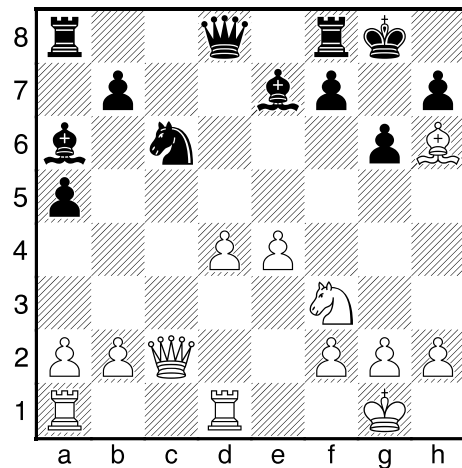
See: Hambleton



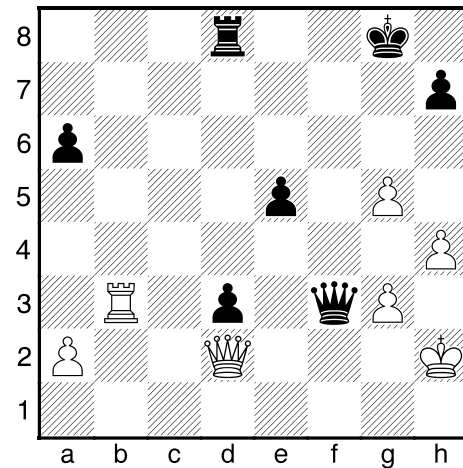
See: On the Road



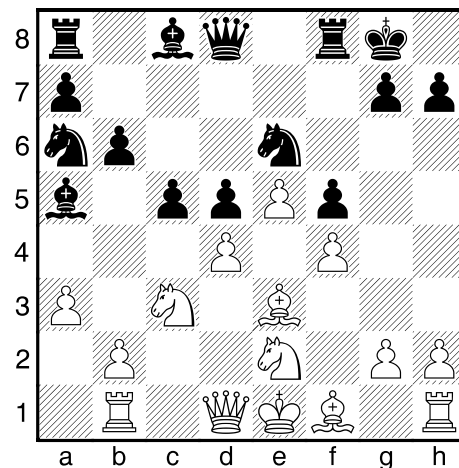
See: On the Road



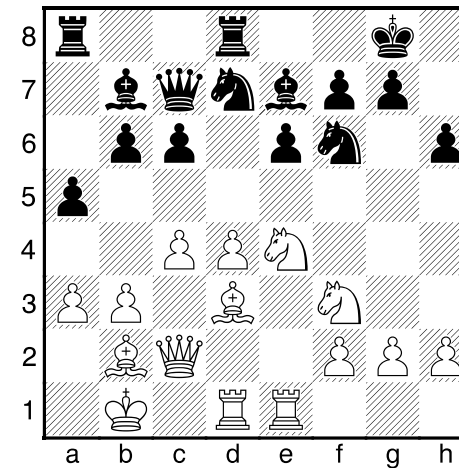
See: On the Road



See: On the Road

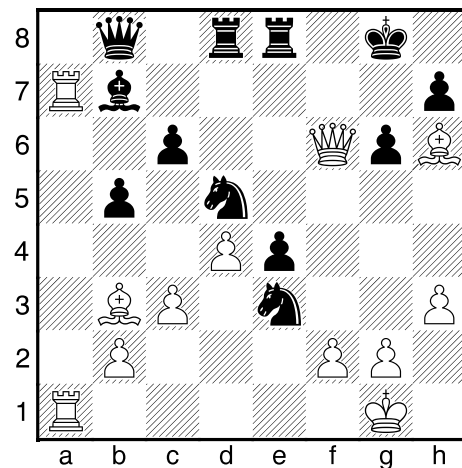


See: Across Canada

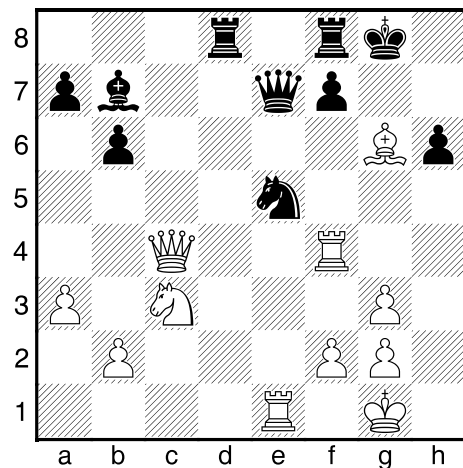


...c5 or ... Nxe4

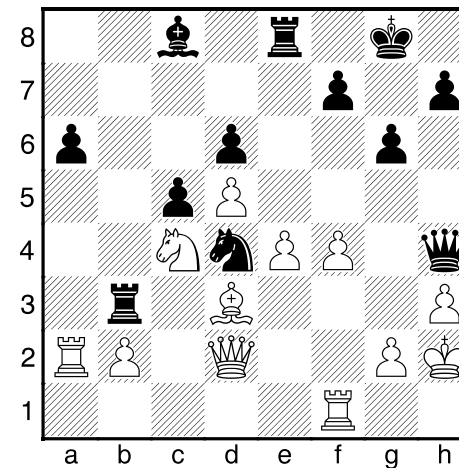
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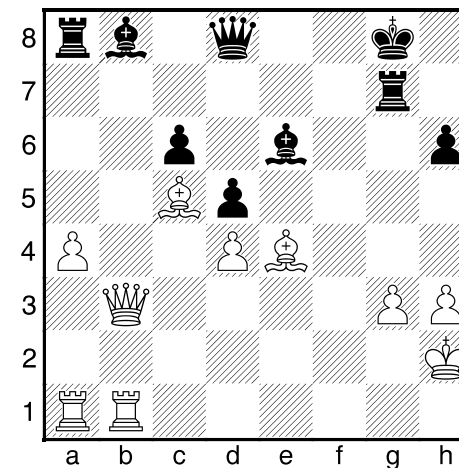
See: On the Road



See: On the Road



See: Across Canada



See: Across Canada



GM Eric Hansen was invited to play in the B-Group at the 2017 TATA Steel tournament in Wijk aan Zee, January 14-29, 2017.

Eric agreed to write a “Tournament Diary” for *Chess Canada* consisting of three entries — one written before, one during, and one after the event — as well as three annotated games.

Ranked 10th of 14 players, Eric was guaranteed to face challenging opponents, but winning would qualify him for the top section, which regularly features the very best players in world chess: including Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana, Vishy Anand, Lev Aronian, and more.

- editor

Wijk aan Zee, The Netherlands 13.01.2017

GM Eric Hansen

The pairings have just come out and all I know is I drew black in round one, which means I’ll end up with one more black in the thirteen-round event. As a pseudo-professional chess player the main problem is holding against well-prepared grandmasters, which is much more of a problem with black than with white.

My feelings coming into the event are quite mixed and all over the place but filled with optimism at every avenue; I have arrived in good physical shape and am mentally calm. As 10th seed and a late-invitee in the strongest event of my career the excitement overtakes any sort of residual internal pressure that I have been hosting ever since I tried to get into this tournament 5 years ago. I’m in a much different place than I was 2 or 3 years ago when I was still on the pro circuit.

With 32 hours to go until the first round I’ll try to find that bubble which worked so well for me at the Baku Olympiad: minimizing my distractions, getting regular exercise, and sleeping at disciplined hours. I’ll have to compensate for my lack of great opening preparation by doing everything else right. The last month or so heading into the event my routine has mainly been gym, chess books (for pleasure), and a lot of meditation/visualization for the impending tournament.

It’s been a real struggle to catch up on opening theory — it is tedious, but

Windy Wijk ann Zee.
Small town, Big chess history.





Chess Canada Gnome

most importantly it is not very practical to me unless you are actually playing often since theory moves so quickly these days. I'm definitely going into this event with a basic game-plan: play very fast, stay solid, and take full advantage of my opportunities. What I mean by that last part is to keep an eye out on the technical aspect — converting or keeping the winning chances alive in better positions — which is one area where I can still improve considerably.

I'm feeling good physically and calculation-wise, so, ideally, I'd like to have long games here in Wijk and see how I do in deep waters. In other words, I am trying to take a page out of Carlsen's playbook. I'd like stay true to myself when I put out the goal of trying to extract as much from every game as possible no matter how dry the situation could be.

- GM Eric Hansen

Ragger, Markus (2697) Hansen, Eric (2603)

C84

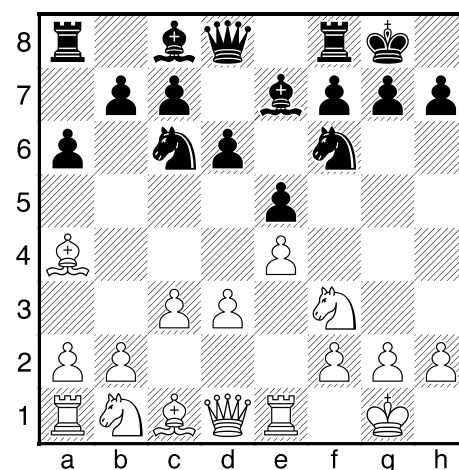
Tata Steel-B 79th Wijk aan Zee (3), 16.01.2017

Notes by John Upper

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5
♘f6 4.d3

Ragger spent 0 seconds on this anti-Berlin move.

4...d6 5.c3 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0
7.♖e1 a6 8.♙a4



8...♘d7

This frees the f-pawn to challenge White's center, and may allow ...♘c5-e6, which White usually stops with ♙e3 or d3-d4.

A month later, in the online PRO

League, Eric's played the World Champion and continued:

8...b5 9.♙c2 ♖e8 10.♘bd2 ♙f8
11.♘f1 ♘b8 12.d4 ♘bd7 13.♘g3
♙b7 14.b3 g6 15.a4 ♙g7 16.♙d3
d5 17.♙g5 dxe4 18.♙xe4 ♙xe4
19.♘xe4 exd4 20.♘xd4 c5 21.♘c6
♙c7 22.♙d6 ♙xd6 23.♘xd6 ♖xe1+
24.♖xe1= Black should be OK
here, but White is Carlsen, and
this was a rapid game. 24...bxa4
(24...c4!) 25.bxa4 ♙f8 26.♘e7+
♙g7 27.a5 ♖b8 28.h3 ♖b3 29.c4
♖d3 30.♙f4 ♖d4 31.♙g3 h5 32.♙f1
♖d3 (32...♘e4!=) 33.♙f4 ♖d4 34.g3
♖d3 35.♘dc8 ♙xe7? 36.♖xe7
♙f8 37.♙h6+- ♙g8 38.♙e3 ♖a3
39.♘d6 ♖xa5 40.♙g2 ♖a2 41.♖xf7
g5 42.♖e7 g4 43.h4 a5 44.♙h6
1-0 [Carlsen, M](#) (2840)–[Hansen, E](#)
(2603) chess.com, 2017.

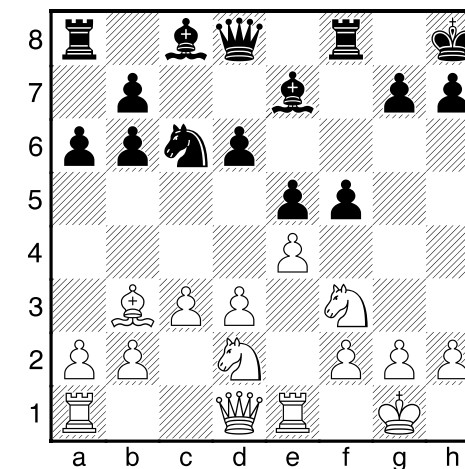
9.d4

Caution: Statistics

About half the games that have reached this position it is White to move (having saved a tempo with d2–d4), but this doesn't seem to make much difference to the results — 50% with Black winning as many as White.

The following game is [Viktor Kortschnoi](#)'s last-ever win over a

2600+ player: 9.♙e3 ♘b6 10.♙b3
♙h8 11.♘bd2 f5 12.♙xb6 cxb6:



Later, Caruana improved with:
13.exf5 ♙xf5 14.d4 exd4 15.♘xd4
♘xd4= (0-1, 32) [Anand, V](#)–
[Caruana, F](#) Saint Louis, 2017.

13.♙d5?! g5!

Not exactly the typical move of an 79-year-old player, but there it is.... Kortschnoi just loves to jam his g-pawns forward. 13...g5!? isn't as crazy as it first appears, since White has a hard time applying the principle: Meet a wing attack with a counter in the centre.

- Lakdawala, Kortschnoi:

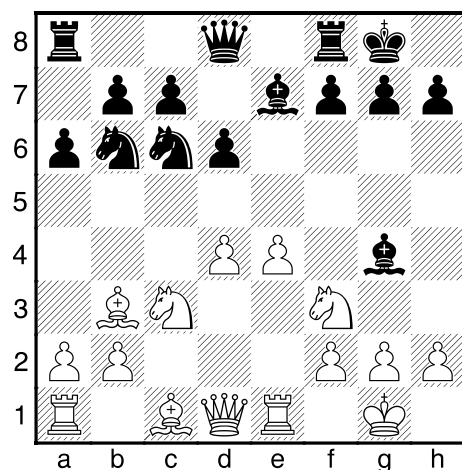
Move by Move

14.h3 g4! 15.hxg4 fxg4 16.♘h2
♙g5 17.♘c4 b5 18.♘e3 ♙xe3



(18...h5!?) 19. ♖xe3 ♗f6 20. ♔e1
♘e7 21. f3 ♘xd5 22. exd5 ♖g8
23. ♗g3? gxf3 24. ♗xf3 ♕f5! 25. ♖f1
♖g5! 26. ♖h1 ♗h6! 27. ♖f2 ♖ag8
28. ♖e1 ♗g6 (28...h5! 29. g3
♗g6+!) 29. ♖e3 ♕xd3+ taking the
B allows ...e4; White struggled on,
but lost (0-1, 46) [Caruana, F \(2721\)](#)
– [Kortchnoi, V](#) Gibraltar, 2011.

9...exd4 10.cxd4 ♘b6
11. ♕b3 ♕g4 12. ♘c3±



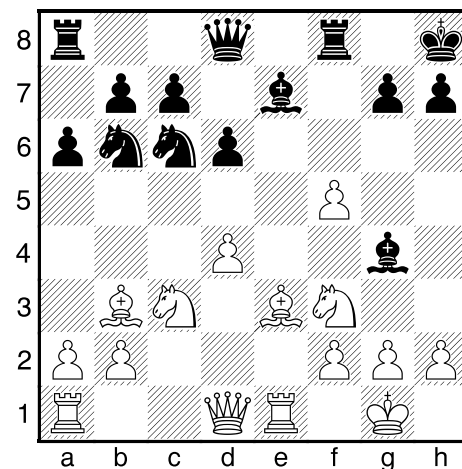
12...♔h8N

12...♕f6 13. ♕e3 g6 14. ♗d3
♕xf3 15. gxf3 ♕g7 16. ♖ad1 ♔h8
(16...♗h4!?) 17. f4 ♗h4 18. ♗e2
♘e7 19. ♖h1 d5 20. e5± (1/2-1/2,
41) [Van Foreest, J \(2548\)](#)–[Short, N](#)
(2678) Douglas, 2015.

13. ♕e3 f5! 14. exf5

Eric had a long think here, and

produced a lemon.



14...♕f6?

14...♕xf5? 15. d5 ♘e5 (15...♘a5
16. ♕xb6 ♘xb3 17. ♗xb3 cxb6
18. ♘d4+-) 16. ♘d4 ♗d7 17. ♘e6+-;
14...d5□± Black will recover the
f-pawn with a roughly balanced
game.

15. ♘e4+-

White also has 15. ♕e6! Simply
saving the pawn with a huge ad-
vantage 15...♘e7 16. ♗d3 ♕xf3
17. gxf3± White's tripled pawns
look weird, but how will Black get
his ♘s into the game?

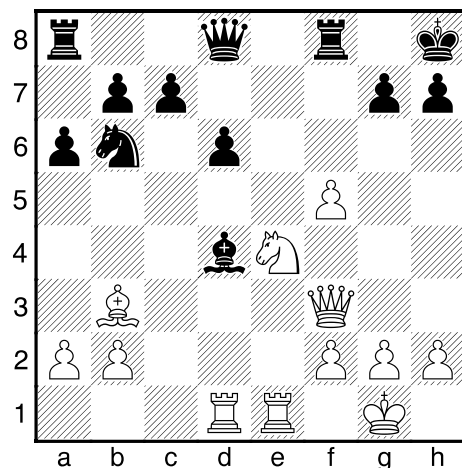
15...♕xf3

15...♕xf5 16. ♘xf6 ♗xf6:
17...♘e7? 18. ♕g5+-;
17...♘a5 18. ♖c1±



17.d5 ♖e5 18.♘xe5 dxe5
19.♖c1±.

16.♙xf3 ♘xd4 17.♙xd4
♙xd4 18.♖ad1+-



Black's ♘b6 and ♖a8 are out of play, while all of White's pieces are centralized and ready to go for

Black's ♖, where White also has a 4v2 majority.

18...c5!

Weakens d6 but supports the ♙ and keeps the d-file blocked.

18...♙xb2 19.♘c5+- and ♘e6 is lights out.

19.♙h5 h6

19...♙e8 20.♙xe8 (20.♙g4!)
20...♖d8 21.♘xd6+-;

19...♘d7 20.♘xd6 (20.♘g5??
♙xf2+!?) 20...♘f6 21.♘f7++-.

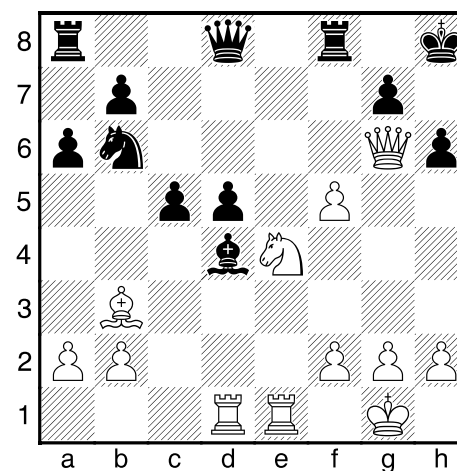
20.♙g6

20.f6! is also resignable:

20...♖xf6 21.♘xf6 ♙xf6 22.♖e8+-

20...♙xf6 21.♘xd6+- or 21.♖xd6+-.

20...d5



21.f6!+- ♙c7

21...♙xf6 22.♘d6 (22.♘xc5+-)
22...♙xd6 23.♙c2+-;

21...♖xf6 22.♘xf6 ♙xf6 23.♖e8+
♖xe8 24.♙xe8+ ♙h7 25.♖d2
(25.♙c2+ g6 26.♙h1!!+- stepping
out of the checks on f2 allows
♖e1-e7.) 25...♘c4 26.♖e2 ♘d6
27.♙c2+-.

22.♘g5! gxf6

22...hxg5 23.♖e7+-.

23.♙xh6+ ♙g8 24.♘e6

1-0

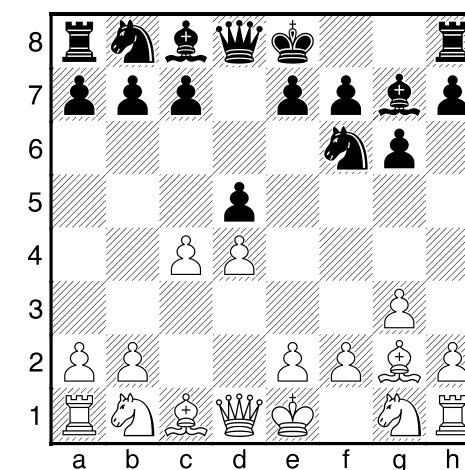
Notes by
GM Eric Hansen
Lei Tingjie (2467)
Hansen, Eric (2603)

D76

79th Tata Steel 'B' Wijk aan Zee
(7.1), 21.01.2017

As I started finding my rhythm in the second half of the tournament, it became apparent that I needed to score a couple wins with Black to catch up to the leaders. Naturally, this was one of those games.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7
4.♙g2 d5



I went for the Grunfeld against her because she had a pretty poor and unpredictable record



chess.com screencap

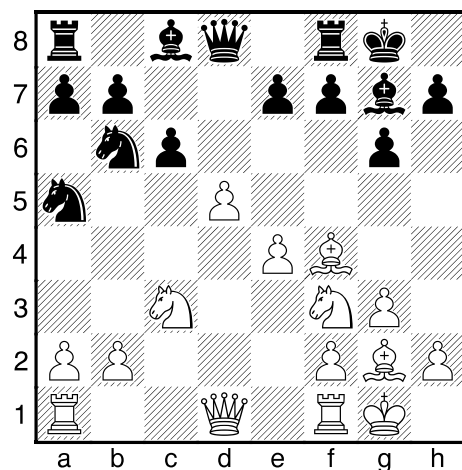


against it.

5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6.♗f3 0-0 7.0-0 ♗c6 8.e4

8.♗c3 ♖b6 9.e3 ♖e8 is considered the main line these days.

8...♗b6 9.d5 ♗a5 10.♗c3 c6 11.♗f4



11...♗ac4

11...cxd5 12.♗xd5 ♗xd5 13.exd5 ♗c4 14.b3 ♗b6 15.d6 exd6 16.♗d4 d5 17.♖c1 ♗d7 18.♗d2 ♗f6 19.♗e3 ♗d6 20.a4± White went on to win a nice game in [Hammer,J-Grandelius,N](#), Oslo 2015.

12.dxc6

12.♗e2 cxd5 13.exd5 ♗g4 14.h3 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♗d6 16.♖fe1 ♖e8

White has a space advantage but Black was able to hold the knight blockade on d6 and the game in [Carlsen,M-Wei Yi](#), Bilbao 2016.

12...♖xd1

12...bxc6?! 13.♖c2 Black has issues dealing with the incoming rook to d1:

13...♗xb2!? 14.♖xb2 ♗a4 15.♗xa4 ♗xb2 16.♗xb2± In practical play the three pieces tend to do better than the Queen when there is a lot of play left on the board;

13...e5 14.♖ad1 ♗e7 15.♗c1± White is seriously better both due to the pawn structure and the incoming b3 which will put the knights in awkward spots.

13.♗xd1 bxc6

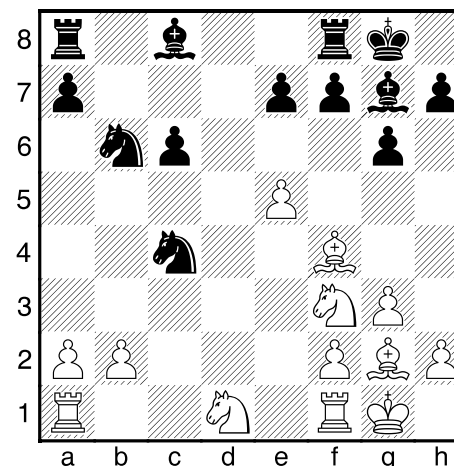
13...e5 14.♗c1, but incorrect is 14.cxb7?! ♗xb7 when Black regains the pawn with great activity.

As a pseudo-professional chess player the main problem is holding against well-prepared grandmasters, which is much more of a problem with black than with white.

At first glance, Black has great activity while White is a bit far

off from attacking the c6 weakness.

14.e5



Played immediately. It looks like this was in my opponent's preparation. Often it is easier to prepare long lines against the Grunfeld due to the forcing nature of some variations. White is now threatening to play ♖c1 and b3 with immediate pressure.

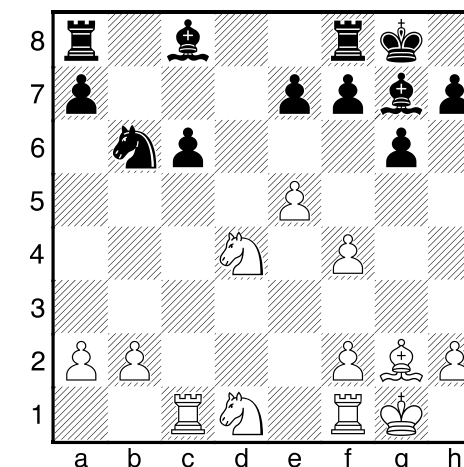
14...♗d5

Logically taking the square that is now available after White's last move.

15.♖c1 ♗cb6

Playable but hard to see was: 15...♗xf4 16.gxf4 ♗b6 17.♗d4

Analysis Diagram:



17...♗d5 18.♗xc6 ♗xf4=;

After **17...♗d7** Black has to be ready for more than just the obvious 18.♗e3:

18.♗xc6 ♗xc6 19.♖xc6 ♖ac8 20.♗e3 ♖xc6 21.♗xc6 ♗h6 22.f5 ♗xe3 23.fxe3 ♗c4;

18.♗xc6 this capture bothered me the most and ultimately dissuaded me from calculating



further. But upon further analysis, I tend to agree with the evaluation that Black has full compensation after 18...♖ad8 the active pieces, f4 weakness, and White's slight development lag contribute toward this; e.g. 19.♘c3 ♕g4.

16.♘d4

16.♕d2! White should take the opportunity to preserve the bishop. 16...♕a6 17.♖e1 ♖ac8 18.♖c5! This key move puts Black in a bind and ultimately gives White the strategic edge without allowing tactics.

editor – White temporarily wins a pawn with **16.♖xc6** but after 16...♘xf4 17.gxf4 ♘d5 Black gets the pawn back and keeps the ♕ pair.

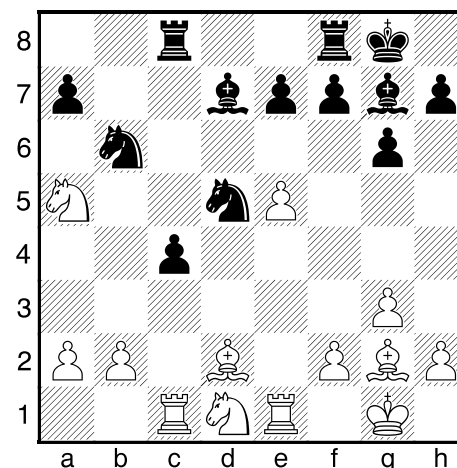
16...♕d7 17.♖e1

17.♘xc6 ♕xc6 18.♖xc6 ♘xf4 19.gxf4 ♖ac8 Black is ready to challenge the c-file and play ...♕h6.

17...♖ac8 18.♕d2

18.♖c5 ♘xf4 19.gxf4 ♕h6.

18...c5 19.♘b3 c4 20.♘a5



20...♕e6

I hesitated from 20...♖c5 21.b4 (21.♘b3=) 21...♖c7 (Strong is 21...c3 22.♘xc3 ♘xb4=) 22.♕xd5 ♘xd5 23.♖xc4 ♖xc4 24.♘xc4 Black has decent compensation with the bishop pair but I wasn't sure it was enough.

21.♕f1 ♖fd8 22.♘xc4

22.f4 ♖c7 23.♘xc4 ♘xc4 24.♖xc4 ♖xc4 25.♕xc4 ♘xf4 26.♕a5 ♖d7 27.♕b5 ♘h3+ 28.♖g2 ♖d5 29.♘c3 ♖d2+ 30.♖e2 ♖xe2+ 31.♕xe2 ♕xe5.

22...♘xc4

We were both in early time trouble at this point so I thought it was time to take some tactical chances.

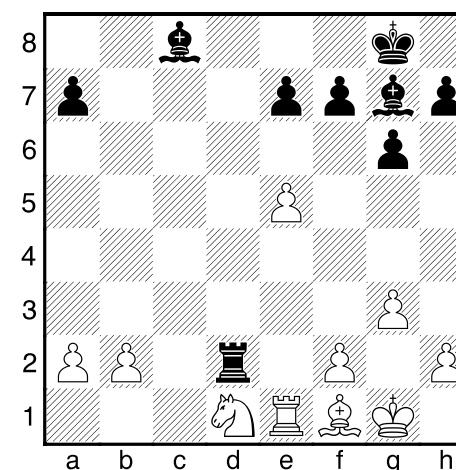
23.♖xc4

23.♕xc4 ♖xc4 24.♖xc4 ♘b6 25.♖c2 ♕f5.

23...♘c7

When I played this I thought I was winning for a brief moment.

24.♖xc7 ♖xd2 25.♖xc8+ ♕xc8↑



At this point I rated my position as preferable. Black's rook on the second rank and bishop potential mean that White has to be precise.

26.a3

White tries to make a useful pass. A logical alternative was 26.f4.

26...♕h6

26...♕xe5?! 27.♖xe5 ♖xd1

28.♖g2 ♕b7+ 29.f3 ♕xf3+ 30.♖xf3 ♖xf1+ 31.♖g2 ♖c1 32.♖xe7 ♖c2+ 33.♖g1 ♖xb2 34.♖xa7= is not a good way to play for a win as Black.

26...♖f8 27.♘c3 ♖xb2 28.♖d1!? ♕xe5 29.♖d8+ ♖g7 30.♖xc8 ♖c2.

26...♕e6!? 27.f4 ♕b3 28.♘e3 ♖xb2 29.♖c1 ♕f8 Ideally, Black wants to get in e6, h5, and ♖g7 with a rook on the 2nd rank. 30.♘c4 ♖a2 31.♖c3 ♕xc4 32.♕xc4 ♖a1+ 33.♖g2 e6 34.♕b5 this is a decent try for Black, although with correct play White should hold fairly easily.

27.h4

Another useful pass from White which prepares to lock down the kingside with f4. I was hoping for 27.f4 g5 28.fxg5 ♕xg5.

27...♕e6 28.f4

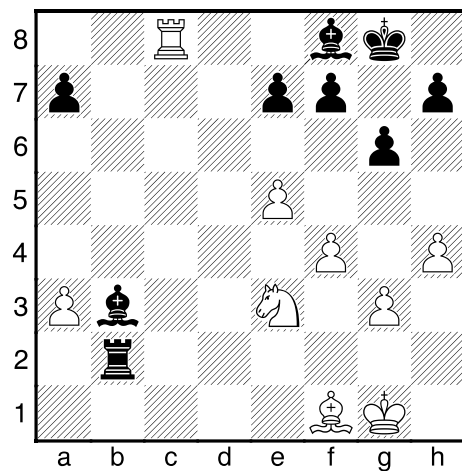
White locks my dark-squared bishop down and gains enough time to get counterplay. 28.b4 ♖a2 get the a-pawn.

28...♕b3 29.♘e3 ♖xb2



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30.♖c1 ♘f8 31.♖c8



If Black manages to free up both bishops the position will be untenable for White. However, she has done an excellent job of preventing this — and with only one minute on the clock!

31...♖a2

I considered 31...e6 too risky in light of 32.♘g4 ♔g7 33.♘f6 ♘xa3? (♞33...♖a2 34.h5!) 34.♖g8+ ♔h6 35.♘e2!! (35.g4? ♘c5+ ♞36.♔h1 ♘d5+ ♞37.♖xe2 36.g4+- checkmate is unstoppable!

32.♖c3

Also playable was 32.♘c4 ♖xa3 33.♘b3 ♖xb3 34.♔f2= White's activity on the kingside is too much.

32...♘a4

32...♖xa3?? 33.♘c4.

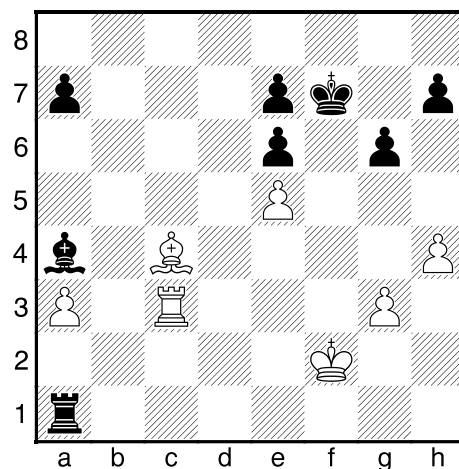
33.e6?!

During the game this move seemed very good to me.

33...fxe6

33...f5 34.♘d5↑

34.♘c4 ♖a1+ 35.♔f2 ♔f7
36.♘g4 ♘g7 37.♘e5+ ♘xe5
38.fxe5



38...♘c6?

I missed a big chance with 38...♘d1! I actually considered the move, but intuitively I thought that putting my pawns all on light squares was asking for too much. But after 38...♘d1! 39.♔e3 ♘g4 40.♔f4 h5 it turns out Black puts the bishop on f5 and keeps

some serious winning chances. The goal would be to eventually try to get ...g5 in after kicking White's king away.

39.♘xe6+ ♔xe6 40.♖xc6+ ♔xe5 41.♖a6

Pushing with Black isn't such a bad thing. But this game I needed to win, and missing 38...♘d1 was a hard one to shake off. I ended up analyzing the move for two hours and came to the conclusion that it was a serious winning opportunity that I missed.

1/2-1/2

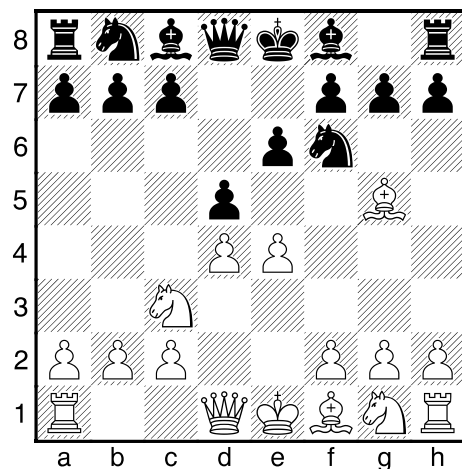
**Notes by
GM Eric Hansen**
Hansen, Eric (2603)
Dobrov, Vladimir (2499)
C13
79th Tata Steel 'B' Wijk aan Zee
(9.6), 24.01.2017

Dobrov was the only lower-rated player who I had White against. I definitely considered it a must win.

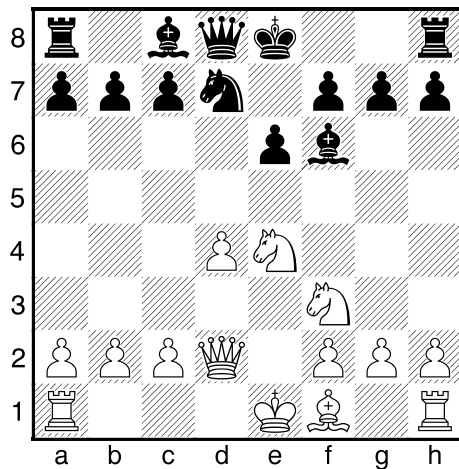
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♘g5

TATA Steel *Small town, Big steel factory.*





This line has fallen out of fashion, but both [Robin \(van Kampen\)](#) and myself have stayed loyal to it.



8...b6

Already an inaccuracy, but neither of us knew this. Standard is 8...e7 9.0-0-0 0-0 10.h4 with

a sharp middlegame.

9.0-0-0

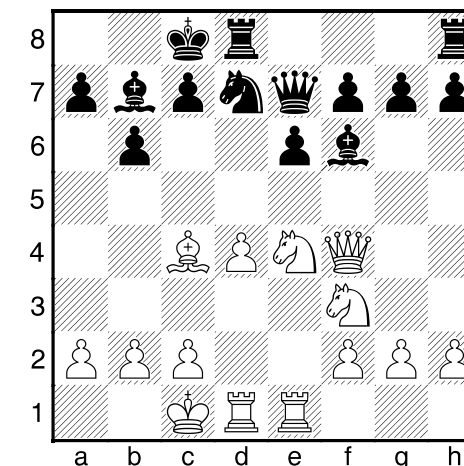
Superior was 9. b5! b7 (9...0-0 10. c6 b8 11.0-0-0 e7 12. b1 f6 13. e5±) 10. xf6+ gxf6 11. c3± Black has a worse structure and White has annoying moves such as ...c6.

9...b7 10. f4

I went for this setup because I thought I had seen it before. I want to follow with c4 and d5 if

possible.

10...e7 11. c4 0-0-0 12. he1



4...dxe4
5. xe4
e7
6. xf6
xf6
7. f3
d7
8. d2



GM Hansen (2603)



GM Grandelius (2642)

Grubbing with Yaz

Eric was a regular guest on the broadcasts.

TATA STEEL CHESS TOURNAMENT 2017

Live broadcast powered by Chess.com



12...b8

Kortchnoi opted for 12...f8 13.g3 g6 14. e3 b8 15.h4 b4 16. b3 h6 17. e2 a5 18.c3 h5 19. fd2 xe2 20. xe2 h5 and Black managed to equalize in [Vallejo Pons-Kortchnoi](#), Biel 2002.

13.c3

At this point White has a pretty good grip on the position. Black needs to act fast before d4-d5 hurts.

13. b1 actually leaves Black with a lot of decent choices:

13... b4 14. b3 a5±;

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Gnome



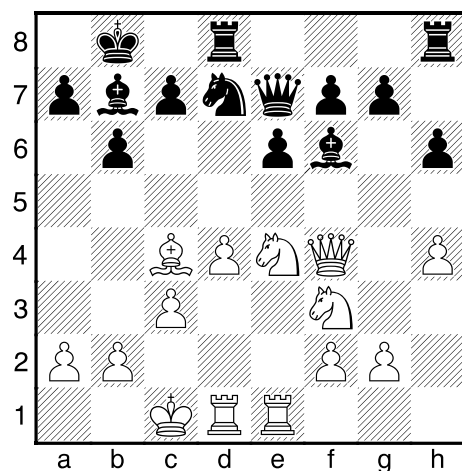
13...e5 14. ♖xf6 ♔xf6 15. ♔xf6
gxf6 16. ♕xf7 exd4 17. ♖xd4 ♕xf3
18. gxf3 ♖e5=;

13...h6 14. h4 g5 (14...♖he8
15. c3 e5∞; 14...♖hg8 15. h5 g5
16. hxg6 ♖xg6=) 15. hxg5 hxg5
16. ♖fxg5 ♖dg8 17. ♖xf6 ♖xf6
18. ♖xf7 ♔xf7 19. ♕xe6 ♔g7
20. ♕xg8 ♖xg8 21. ♖d3±.

13...h6

Not 13...e5 14. ♖xf6 gxf6 15. ♔f5
♖hg8 16. g3±.

14. h4

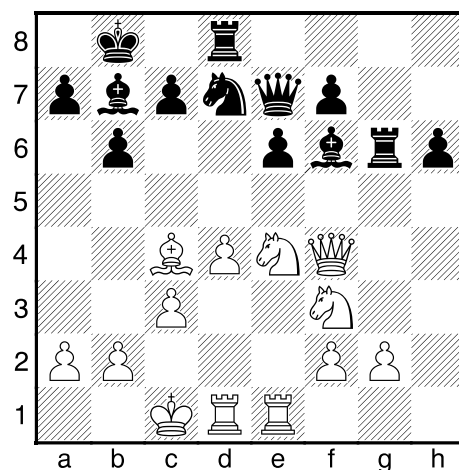


14...♖hg8

A mistake. Black had to follow
through. Better was 14...
g5! 15. hxg5 hxg5 16. ♖fxg5
(16. ♖exg5 ♖dg8 17. ♖e4
(17. ♖xf7 ♔xf7 18. ♕xe6 ♔f8

19. ♕xg8 ♔xg8) 17...♖xg2
18. ♖xf6 ♔xf6 19. ♔xf6 ♖xf6
20. ♖e5 ♖hh2 21. ♖h1=)
16...♖dg8 (16...♖hg8 17. ♖xf6
♖xf6 18. ♖xe6+-) 17. ♖xf6
♖xf6 and now the critical line
is 18. ♖xf7 ♔xf7 19. ♕xe6 ♔g7
20. ♕xg8 ♖xg8 21. g3 ♖f8= and
with the Queens on the board
I feel the position is close to
dynamically equal.

15. h5 g5 16. hxg6 ♖xg6



Black has compromised his
structure but is ready to play
both ...♖xg2 and ...♕g5. White
needs to act fast.

17. d5

17. g3 ♕g5 18. ♖exg5 hxg5
19. ♔e3 g4 20. ♖h4 ♖g5=.

17...♕g5

Much better was 17...♖f8
18. ♖xf6 ♔xf6 19. ♔xf6 ♖xf6
20. dxe6 ♖xd1+ 21. ♖xd1 ♖xe6
22. ♕xe6 ♖xe6 23. ♖d8+ ♕c8
White can claim a symbolic edge
due to the pawn structure, but
as soon as Black plays ...c5 and
...♔c7 I don't see enough for
White. For example, the Rook
can camp on f6 annoyingly.

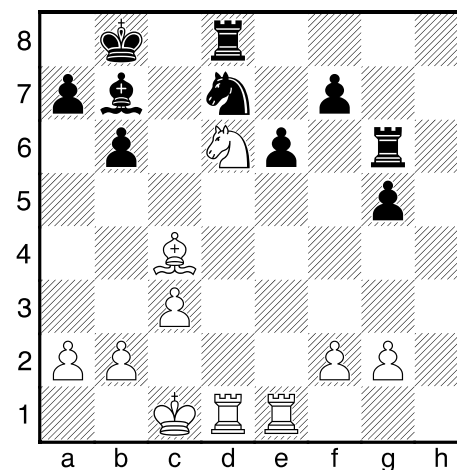
18. ♖fxg5

18. ♖exg5 hxg5 19. ♔g3±.

18...hxg5 19. d6

19. ♔xc7+ ♔xc7 20. d6+ ♔xd6
21. ♖xd6 with the same position
as the game, except the King
is on c7 which shouldn't help
White.

19...cxd6 20. ♔xd6+ ♔xd6 21. ♖xd6

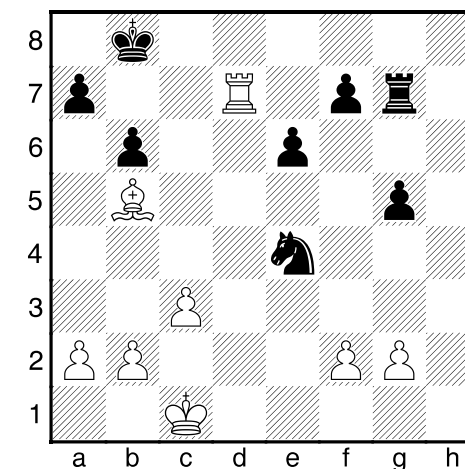


21...♕c6?

A time trouble blunder although
the alternatives are not so
simple: 21...♖f6 22. ♖xb7 ♔xb7
23. ♖d2+- Black is paralyzed.

The critical line is: 21...♖g7
22. ♖xb7 ♔xb7 23. ♕b5 ♔c7
24. ♖e4 ♖c5 25. ♖xd8 ♖xe4
(25...♔xd8 26. ♖d4+ ♔c8 27. b4
♖b7 28. ♕a6±) 26. ♖d7+ ♔b8

Analysis Diagram:



I didn't look any further than here
because I assumed this would
be a fantastic endgame. 27. ♔c2:
27...♖xf2 28. ♕a6+- ♖e4
29. ♖b7+ ♔a8 30. ♖c7 ♖g8
31. ♖xf7+-;
27...♖f6 28. ♖e7 ♖d5 29. ♖e8+
♔b7 30. c4 ♖b4+ 31. ♔d2± I
give White a big plus since ♖e7
cannot be stopped.



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22. ♖xf7 ♜f8 23. ♙xe6 ♜c5
24. ♙c4 b5 25. ♖e5

It is all but over.

25...bxc4 26. ♖xg6 ♜xf2
27. ♖e5 ♔c7

27...♙e4 28. ♖d7+ ♜xd7
29. ♜xe4+-.

One of my smoothest victories of the event because it was a fairly complete game: I achieved a small plus, played the middle game well, put severe pressure on my opponent's clock, and converted my chances.

1-0

editor:

The following is a miniature win over a 2600+ player. It may be sign of Eric's high standards that he chose *not* to annotate this game and opted for games with more fight in them.

Lu, Shanglei (2612)
Hansen, Eric (2603)

A00

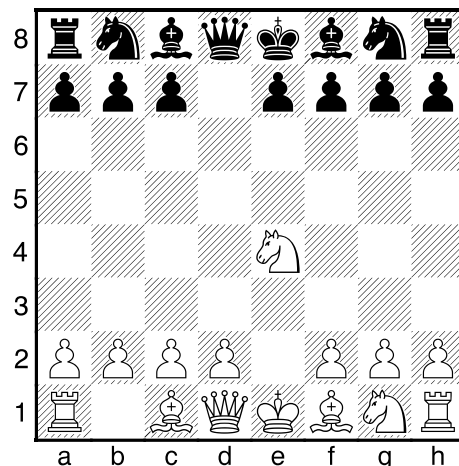
Tata Steel-B 79th Wijk aan Zee (10), 25.01.2017

Notes by John Upper

1. ♖c3 d5 2.e4 dxe4

Transposing to a Scandinavian.

3. ♖xe4



3...♖f6

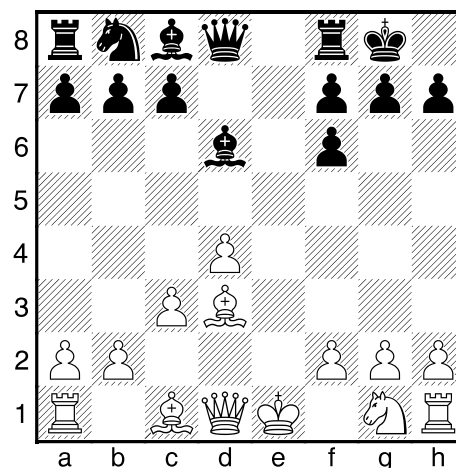
3...♙f5 4. ♜e2 threatening ♜b5+ 4...♖d7 5.d3 e6 (5...♖gf6 6. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6) 6.g4! ♙g6 7.h4 h5 8.g5 ♖e7 9.♙d2 ♖c6 10.0-0-0 ♙e7 11.♙c3 0-0 12.♖h3 (1/2-1/2, 102) **Lu, S-Topalov, V**, Baku 2015;

3...e5 4. ♙c4 ♖c6 5.d3 h6 6.♙d2 ♖f6 7.♖f3 ♖xe4 8.dxe4 ♙d6 9.h3 ♜e7 10.♜e2 ♙e6 11.0-0-0 ♙xc4 12.♜xc4 ♙c5 13.♙e3= ♙b6!?! (1/2-1/2, 27) **Lu, S-Harikrishna, P** China 2018;

3...♖d7 4.d4 ♖gf6 5.♙d3 ♖xe4 6.♙xe4 ♖f6 7.♙f3 c6 with something like a Fort Knox

variation in the French. 8.♖e2 ♙g4 9.♙xg4 ♖xg4 10.h3 ♖f6 11.c4 e6 12.0-0 ♙e7 13.b3 0-0 14.♙b2 ♜c7 (1/2-1/2, 55) **Mamedyarov, S-Giri, A** chess.com INT, 2018.

4. ♖xf6+ exf6 5.d4 ♙d6
6.♙d3 0-0 7.c3



White has no weaknesses, while Black has a slight lead in development and a difficult-to-break-down kingside pawn structure.

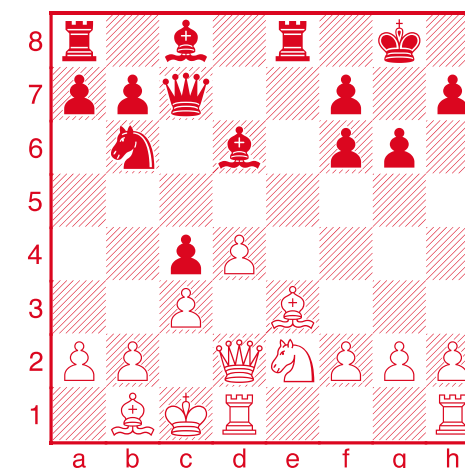
7...♜e8+

7...♖c6 8.♖e2 f5 9.♜c2 ♜f6 10.♙d2 h6 11.0-0-0!?! a5 12.♖g3 ♖e7 13.f3 a4 14.♔b1 c5 15.dxc5 ♙xc5 16.♜he1 ♖d8 17.♙f4 ♙e6 18.♙e5 ♜g6 19.♖e2 ♖d5 (19...♙xa2+!) 20.♖d4 ♙xd4

21.♙xd4 ♖b4! 22.cxb4 ♜xd4+ (1/2-1/2, 46) **Topalov, V-Kramnik, V** Norway blitz, 2014.

7...c5!? is an interesting sac 8.dxc5 ♙xc5= 9.♙xh7+?! (9.♖e2=) 9...♔xh7 10.♜h5+ ♔g8 11.♜xc5 ♜e8+ (11...b6!?) 12.♙e3 ♜d3=.

8.♖e2 c5 9.♙e3 ♖d7
10.♜c2 g6 11.0-0-0 ♜c7
12.♜d2 c4! 13.♙b1 ♖b6



14.h4?

Thematic, but apparently the losing move.

White had to prevent Black's next move with 14.d5!

14...♖d5!

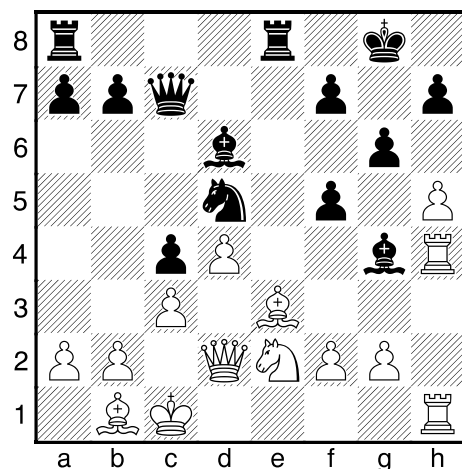
Attacking ♙e3 and supporting



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...f5-f4 when Black has material-winning pressure on the e-file.

15.h5 ♖g4! 16.♖h4 f5
17.♖dh1



17...♖e7!

Simply doubling on the e-file, with the bonus of protecting along the 7th.

17...♖xe2? actually gives up Black's advantage:

18.♖xe2? g5-+;

18.hxg6 ♖xe3 (18...fxg6?

19.♖xh7± ♖xh7 20.♖xh7 ♖xh7

21.♖xe2 and here 21...f4 fails to

both ♖xc4 and ♖h5+.) 19.fxe3

fxg6 (19...♖d3 20.♖xd3 hxg6)

20.♖xh7 ♖xh7 21.♖xh7 ♖xh7

22.♖xe2 ♖f4 23.♖xc4±.

18.♖c2

18.f3 doesn't save White, since Black has both the simple

18...♖xh5-+ and the ruthless

18...♖xe3 19.fxg4 ♖xe2 20.♖xe2

♖f4+ 21.♖d1 ♖e3+-+.

18...♖ae8 19.♖a4 ♖xe3

Not the only winning move, but the most forcing.

19...♖xe3 20.♖xe8 ♖xg2-+.

20.hxg6

20.fxe3 ♖xe3 with extra material and threats on e2 and the c1-f4 diagonal.

20...fxg6

0-1

Media Attention Much?

Photo scrum for Carlsen.



photo: Alina L'Ami

Wijk aan Zee

1/27/2017

90 minutes to go until game time. After a slow start in the event I am quite surprised to find myself only half a point behind the leading pack with a very solid plus three score. My last two games have been far easier than expected, and during the rest day I tried to internalize and reflect as much as possible so as to avoid getting complacent. With two whites to go and the lowest-rated with black, I have a great chance to win this event if I can keep control. By keeping control I mean normal positions without too much reliance on preparation or tactics unless need be. I'm trying to summon the Hansen finishing kick which propelled me to many tournament placements when I was younger.

Today is a huge test since I am playing **Gawain Jones** who is extremely dangerous, although he has a visibly shaky side as well. He beat me easily from an inferior position at the 2014 Tromso Olympiad which stung for quite some time. My unexpected win vs Lu Shanglei has given me a bit of flexibility in terms of catching up, which means I don't consider this game a must-win. At this point I just want to continue playing well on the clock and maintaining slight pressure against my opponents. I'll take my chances when the mistakes present themselves.

The tournament itself is feeling like a marathon and all I've done is eat, sleep, prepare, with occasional walks on the beach. I can't wait for it to be over because three weeks with little to do in social opportunities is driving me a bit crazy. Fortunately for me, **Yasser Seirawan** is staying in the same hotel and his extensive wisdom and great company has been a huge boost as usual. Anyways, I don't expect to play that much in 2017, so the opportunity here that has presented itself is immense and I can feel the pressure in its entirety 24/7.

- GM Eric Hansen



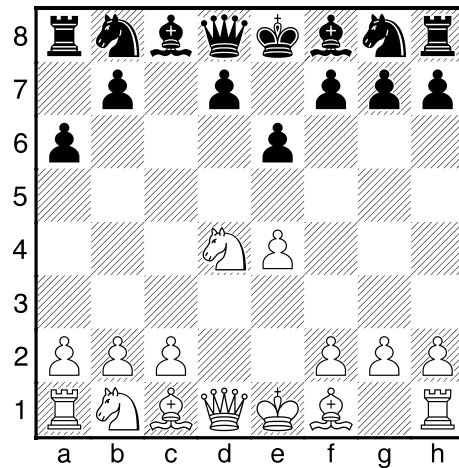
Notes by GM Eric Hansen

Hansen, Eric (2603)
Smirin, Ilya (2667)

B42

79th Tata Steel 'B' Wijk aan Zee
(13.3), 29.01.2017

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 a6



The Kan caught me by surprise since not only did I beat Smirin in this opening in 2014, but also because he had done well in Wijk with two Black wins from the Modern Defense.

5.♕d3

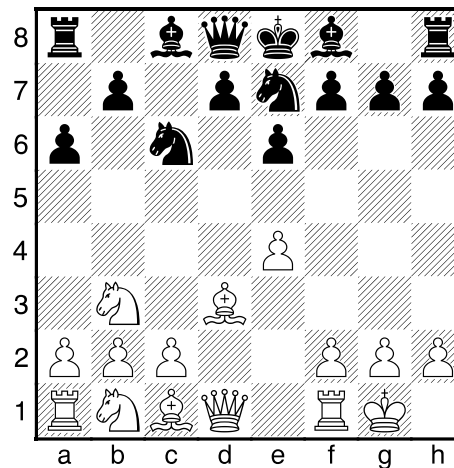
Last time I went for a c4 Maroczy structure. Assuming he had some prep I decided to go for the

main line 5.♕d3.

5...♘e7!?

A playable move that immediately took me out of book. Ilya needed a last round win to have a chance for first, so I suspect he wanted a non-theoretical position.

6.0-0 ♖bc6 7.♘b3



On one hand I avoid trading pieces and the knight on e7 doesn't have a second base. On the other hand, knights on b3 aren't particularly dangerous.

7...♘g6

Smirin is an ultra-aggressive player who sometimes gets away with dubious setups. The knight on g6 is not good unless White

stumbles into something.

In hindsight, I think 7...g6!? is a bit more annoying to deal with. Artemiev plays this line, and if Black can get in a quick ...d5 he might be quite happy.

An example would be 8.a4 ♕g7 9.a5 d5 10.♘1d2 0-0 11.c3 e5= [Horvitz,R-Seirawan,Y](#), 1987.

Instead, 8.c4 ♕g7 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♕g5 h6 11.♕h4 g5 12.♕g3 ♘e5 13.♕e2 ♘7g6 14.♖d2 b6= [Jakovenko,D-Artemiev,V](#), 2015.

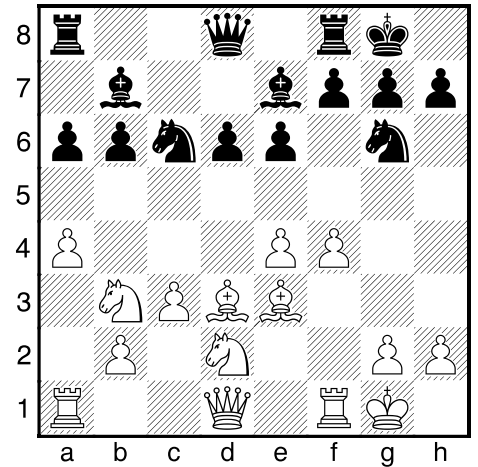
8.a4

A different but effective setup was adopted in a previous game: 8.♘c3 b5 9.♕e3 ♕e7 10.f4 0-0 11.♖h5 d6± [Leko,P-Carlsen,M](#) Amber, 2008. Black still struggles to find enough space to manoeuvre effectively.

8...b6 9.f4 ♕e7 10.♕e3 d6
11.c3

Stylistically, I wanted to play against Smirin and his aggression. I was hoping to put my pieces on good squares while avoiding committal moves: c3 rather than c4 is an example.

11...0-0 12.♘1d2 ♕b7



13.♖f3!

This simple move was my longest think of the game and what caused Ilya a lot of trouble. I'm simply threatening ♖f2 while trying to avoid any can-opening moves by Black.

I was initially attracted to 13.♘c4... hoping for 13...b5? 14.♘b6 ♖b8 15.axb5 axb5 16.♕xb5±. I'm a fully fledged pawn-grabber these days (thanks Yasser). ... until I realized that Ilya had something else in store: 13...d5! 14.♕xb6 (14.♘xb6 d4!?) 14... dxc4 15.♕xd8 ♖fxd8=.

13.♖h5 e5 14.f5 (14.g3 exf4 15.gxf4± the space advantage is still good for White, but I



Chess Canada Gnome

didn't see the need to expose my king, especially when I can't follow up with f4-f5.) 14...♘f4 15.♙xf4 exf4 16.♖xf4 ♘e5 17.♙e2 ♖e8∞ with great compensation for Black with the two bishops, knight on e5, and the potential to cause chaos with ...d5.

13.♙e2 is no different: 13...e5 14.f5 ♘f4 15.♙xf4 exf4 16.♖xf4 ♘e5 17.♖ff1 ♖e8↑ with the same sort of dynamic imbalance that I didn't want.

13...e5

13...♘b8 followed by ...♘d7 was a good try. Black has a slow setup but it's not easy for White to take advantage of it.

13...♘a5!? 14.♙f2 ♘xb3 15.♘xb3 b5 16.♘a5! ♙d7 17.g3 ♖ab8 18.♘xb7 ♖xb7 19.axb5 axb5 20.h4±.

14.f5 ♘f4 **15.♙c2**



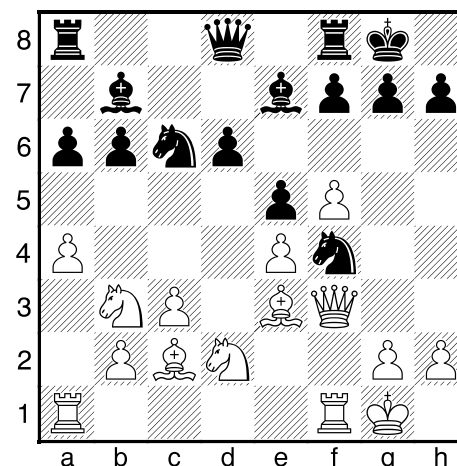
GM Ilya Smirin

15...d5

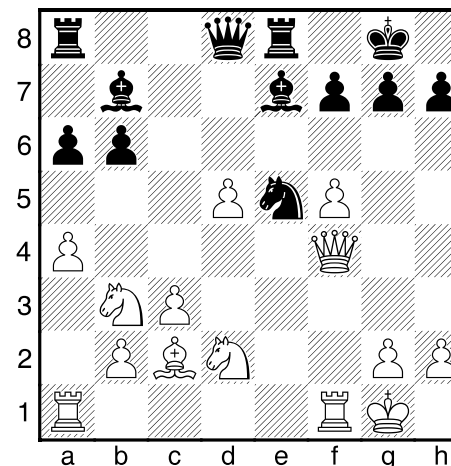
15...♙g5? allows White to trap the ♘: 16.g3 ♘h3+ 17.♙g2 ♙xe3 18.♙xe3 ♘g5 19.h4+-.

16.♙xf4 exf4

17.exd5 ♘e5 18.♙xf4 ♖e8



And here the benefit of ♙f3 becomes clear: ...♘f4 doesn't come with tempo, which allows White to play around it and attempt to trap it with g3.



19.♘e4

19.c4 ♙g5 20.♙g3 ♖c8→;

19.f6! a similar idea as the

game, and superior because it is forcing: **19...♙xf6** 20.♘e4+-; 19...♙xd5 20.♙e4 ♙c5+ 21.♙h1 ♙d7 22.♖ad1+-; 19...gxf6 20.♖ad1 ♙xd5 21.♙e4 ♙d7 22.♘f3 ♙c8 23.♙xb7 ♙xb7 24.♘e5 fxe5 25.♙g4+ ♙h8 26.♖d7 ♙c6 27.♖xf7 ♖g8 28.♖xh7+ ♙xh7 29.♖xe7+-.

19...♙xd5

Maybe the only attempt to survive was 19...f6 20.♖ad1 ♙xd5± and to follow up with ...♖a7-d7. During the game I didn't think Black could take this pawn because of the pin, so my two pawn advantage would be decisive. 21.♘d4 b5 22.♙h1 ♙b6.

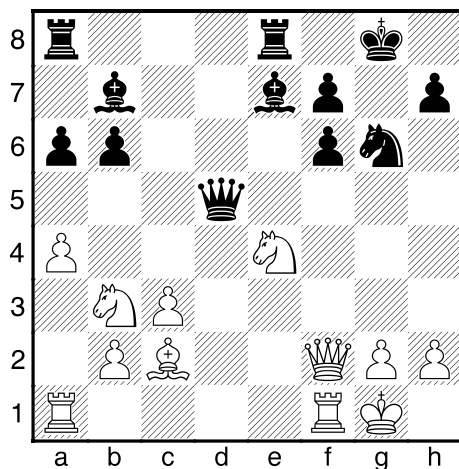
20.f6 ♘g6

20...♙xf6 21.♙xf6 gxf6 22.♘xf6+ ♙g7 23.♘xd5 ♙xd5 24.♘d4± During the game I considered this endgame lost for Black, but I am not bold enough to definitely say it in my notes here. Extra pawn, queenside majority, and better structure should be enough.

21.♙f2 gxf6



Chess Canada Gnome



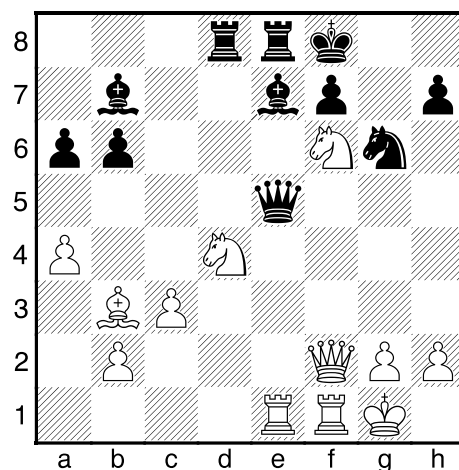
22. ♖d4!+-

It was at this point I considered my position absolutely winning. Once I saw ♘d4 I realized it was over because it allows me to have impeccable coordination before I go for the throat. My next moves are ♖ae1 and ♙b3 and Black is helpless.

22. ♖ad1 ♙c4
23. ♘xf6+
(23. ♘g3!? ♖ad8
24. ♘d4 ♙c5
also looked like it was giving Black too much activity.) 23... ♙xf6
24. ♙xf6 ♖e2
seemed totally unnecessary.

22... ♖ad8 23. ♖ae1 ♔f8
24. ♙b3 ♙e5
24... ♙xe4 25. ♖xe4 ♙xe4 26. h4
h5 27. ♙e3+.

25. ♘xf6



25... ♙xf6

25... ♙xf6 26. ♙g3
♙g7 (26... ♙d6
27. ♖xf6 ♙xg3
28. ♖xf7+ ♔g8
29. ♖xb7+ ♔h8
30. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8
31. hxg3+-) 27. ♘e6+.

26. ♙g3

A picturesque final position where every piece does its job.

I was able to punish a slightly dubious opening setup by Smirin in a game that felt pretty heavy due to the last round consequences.

1-0



Close call vs Guramishvili

"On the ropes" would be a euphemism.

Next Page: Eric gets the Vugar Gashimov Fairplay Award.

	Player		FIDE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total	TPR
1	GM Gawain Jones	ENG	2665		1	0	1	½	0	1	½	½	1	1	1	½	1	9	2728
2	GM Markus Ragger	AUS	2697	0		1	1	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	1	9	2726
3	GM Jeffery Xiong	USA	2667	1	0		0	½	1	0	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	8½	2697
4	GM Eric Hansen	CAN	2603	0	0	1		1	1	½	½	½	½	1	1	½	½	8	2679
5	GM Lu Shanglei	CHN	2612	½	½	½	0		0	1	½	1	1	1	1	½	½	8	2678
6	GM Ilya Smirin	ISR	2667	1	½	0	0	1		0	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	8	2674
7	GM Aryan Tari	NOR	2584	0	½	1	½	0	1		½	½	½	½	½	1	1	7½	2650
8	GM Erwin I'Ami	NED	2605	½	½	½	½	½	½	½		½	½	½	0	1	1	7	2621
9	GM Nils Grandelius	SWD	2642	½	½	0	½	0	½	½	½		½	1	½	1	1	7	2618
10	GM Benjamin Bok	NED	2608	0	½	½	½	0	0	½	½	½		0	½	1	1	5½	2535
11	GM Vladimir Dobrov	RUS	2499	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	0	1		0	1	1	4½	2490
12	GM Jorden van Foreest	NED	2612	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	1	½	½	1		0	½	4	2450
13	WGM Lei Tingjie	CHN	2467	½	0	0	½	½	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		1	3½	2427
14	IM Sopiko Guramishvili	GEO	2370	0	0	0	½	½	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	0		1½	2274

Links

Walrus story on Eric by Sasha Chapin:

<https://thewalrus.ca/canadas-bid-to-create-a-world-chess-champion/>

ChessBrah stream:

<https://www.twitch.tv/chessbrah>



Moving Forward

It's been quite some time since Wijk aan Zee has passed and I'm faced with a dilemma: ***my standards for chess tournaments have been raised so much that I don't know where to play.*** Besides the weather and the monotony that comes with a chess tournament held in a small village, the organizational aspect of the event was top notch. The windy and wet weather actually isn't a problem for me, but what it means is that most people are in an indoor mood, which isn't always ideal after sitting in a chair for five hours.

After so many years of playing tournament chess there are two main conclusions I can confidently draw. The first is that I play better when I am located near a body of water. Something about waking up and looking out of my window to a view of endless water puts me in good spirits. Maybe because I lacked it growing up in Calgary — I don't know. The second conclusion is that I score better in tournaments that have a lot of media/attention. It would be unrealistic at my level to always expect beautiful seaside chess tournaments with good coverage. I simply have to get better at the 'regular season' games.



I had hardly any deep prep for the tournament and as a result didn't really find myself in prep a single time out of thirteen games. Ironically, in the one game where I tried to prepare something, my opponent, GM Bok, absolutely out-prepared me and drew easily with Black. Overall, I absolutely took a page out of Carlsen's book when it came to my approach: lots of exercise, lots of balance in day-to-day activities, and a few general ideas in the opening while avoiding super theoretical positions that come down to memory. The bulk of my chess study was just studying classical games. I am sure Yasser has had an influence on that, since he is an extremely strong middlegame player but no longer booked up theoretically. I've spent extended amounts of time with him both in Amsterdam and in St. Louis where we are co-workers.

Well, here I am, finally stabilized over 2600. **What's next?** I have no tournaments scheduled until late September when I will play the Isle of Man Open. I have an extremely busy schedule until then in other chess-related matters, but I also haven't received any interesting offers to compete. My goal is to go for top 100 next, but I'll need to make a few more serious adjustments in my game before I can realistically aim to achieve that. Openings are still an issue, and I feel like my pattern-recognition in endgames could be improved. Besides that, my chess book collection has gone from practically zero to thirty in the last year!

- GM Eric Hansen



Notes by IM Aman Hambleton Wagner, Dennis (2577) Hambleton, Aman (2434)

A30

GRENKE Chess Open Baden-Baden (5), 15.04.2017

In round 5 of the GRENKE Chess Open I played against GM Dennis Wagner from Germany, a young player and someone I was playing for the first time. After a slow start this was the first time I was paired up. It's always important to make these games count so you can continue to play against strong opposition!

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6

Inviting my opponent to transpose back to the QID with d4 e6 since that was what I prepared mostly.

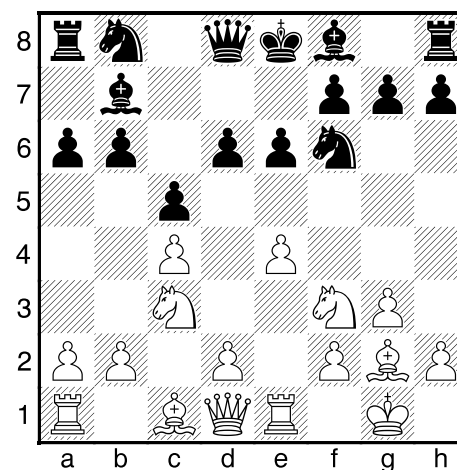
**3.g3 ♖b7 4.♙g2 c5 5.0-0 e6
6.♘c3 a6**

The hedgehog move order, controlling the b5 square so that White cannot put as much pressure on d6.

7.♖e1

7.d4 cxd4 8.♙xd4 d6 9.♙g5
♘bd7 is another main line.

7...d6 8.e4



8...♙e7

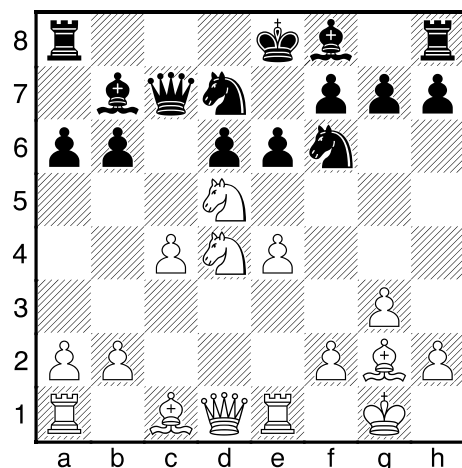
8...♘bd7? 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘xd4
now Black needs to play ...♙c7
to protect the ♖b7 against the
threat of e5, but it fails to a
typical motif... 10...♙c7 11.♘d5!±





Chess Canada Gnome

Analysis Diagram:



editor – Aman has had this position before, and went down quickly after declining the piece. Black can take the $\text{N}d5$ without getting mated or immediately having to give back the piece, but White gets a terrific long-term attack. Here are two examples:

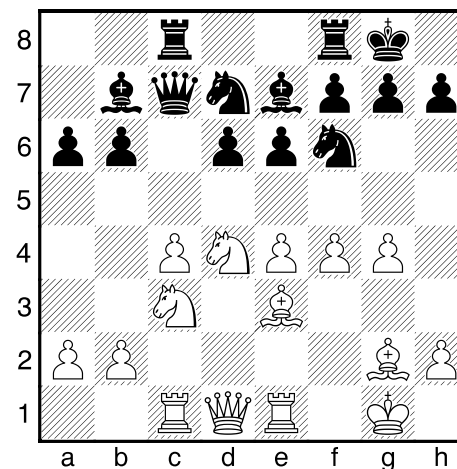
11... $\text{Q}b8$ 12. $\text{Q}g5!$ $\text{Q}e7$ 13. $\text{N}xe7$ $\text{Q}xe7$ Black has a very bad Hedgehog and now gets destroyed on the dark squares.
14.f4 h6 15. $\text{Q}xf6+$ $\text{N}xf6$ 16.e5+- dxe5 17.fxe5 $\text{N}d7$ 18. $\text{Q}c6!!$ $\text{Q}c7$ 19. $\text{Q}f3!$ $\text{N}xe5$ 20. $\text{Q}a3+$! $\text{Q}f6$ 21. $\text{Q}xb7$ $\text{Q}xb7$ 22. $\text{Q}c3$ $\text{R}hd8$ 23. $\text{R}e3$ $\text{Q}c7$ 24. $\text{N}f3$ (1-0, 24) [Dvirnyy,D \(2540\)](#)–[Hambleton,A \(2461\)](#) Forni di Sopra, 2013.

11...exd5 12.exd5+ $\text{Q}d8$ 13. $\text{N}c6+$ $\text{Q}xc6$ (13... $\text{Q}c8$ 14.b4!→) 14.dxc6 $\text{N}c5$ 15.b4+- $\text{N}e6$ 16.c5 (16.a4! $\Delta a5$, aiming to plant the Q on b6.) 16... $\text{Q}e7$ 17.cxb6 $\text{Q}xb6$ 18. $\text{Q}e3$ $\text{Q}c7$ 19.a4 $\text{R}b8$ 20.b5 axb5 21.axb5 $\text{R}xb5$ 22. $\text{R}a8+$ $\text{R}b8$ 23. $\text{R}a7$ $\text{Q}c8$ 24. $\text{Q}f4$ White is still down a whole piece, but Black would have to play the illegal and impossible ... $\text{R}h8$ -c7 just to equalize.
24... $\text{Q}e8$ 25.c7 $\text{R}b4$ 26. $\text{Q}c6+$ $\text{Q}f8$ 27. $\text{R}a8$ $\text{Q}xa8$ 28. $\text{Q}xa8$ $\text{R}c4$ 29. $\text{Q}xd6$ $\text{N}e8$ 30. $\text{Q}xe7+$ $\text{Q}xe7$ 31. $\text{Q}d8+$ $\text{Q}f8$ 32.c8 Q 1-0, [Roussel Roozmon,T \(2430\)](#)–[Lawson,E \(2393\)](#) Montreal, 2006.

9.d4 cxd4 10. $\text{N}xd4$ $\text{Q}c7$ 10... $\text{N}bd7$ 11.e5±.

11. $\text{Q}e3$ 0-0 11... $\text{Q}xc4??$ 12. $\text{R}c1$ $\text{Q}c7$ 13. $\text{N}d5$ +.

12. $\text{R}c1$ $\text{N}bd7$ 13.f4 $\text{R}ac8$ 14.g4



Despite the aggressive nature of this move, we are still following known theory. The computer really favours White, but that is the case in positions with large space advantages like the hedgehog or KID.

14... $\text{N}c5$

By compelling the Bishop to move from e3, the f4 pawn lacks support and this is critical for the ensuing variations.

15. $\text{Q}f2$ g6 16.b4

editor – 16.g5 $\text{N}h5$ 17. $\text{Q}e3$ e5 18. $\text{N}de2$ exf4 ∞ ($\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$, 43) [Svidler,P \(2754\)](#)–[Carlsen,M \(2801\)](#) Moscow blitz, 2009.

16... $\text{R}fd8?$!

16... $\text{N}cd7$ 17.b5 $\text{N}c5$ is the solid option. Black is still slightly worse. 18. $\text{R}c2$ ±.

17.f5

17.bxc5 dxc5= is obviously exactly the type of complications Black is hoping for.

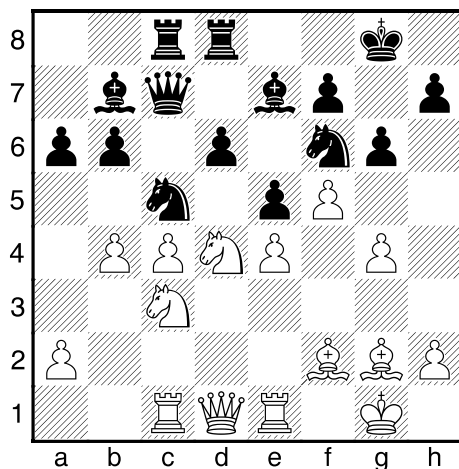
17...e5

Aman in Germany

No norm, but good prep.



Chess Canada Gnome



18.g5?

18. ♖c2 ♘cd7 19.g5 ♘h5 20.f6 ♙f8 21. ♘e3±.

18...♘h5?

Giving White another chance to play ♘f3 and avoid complications in the middle of the board.

18...♘fxe4 19. ♘xe4 ♘xe4 20.fxg6 hxg6 21. ♙xe4∞ was difficult to evaluate over the board.

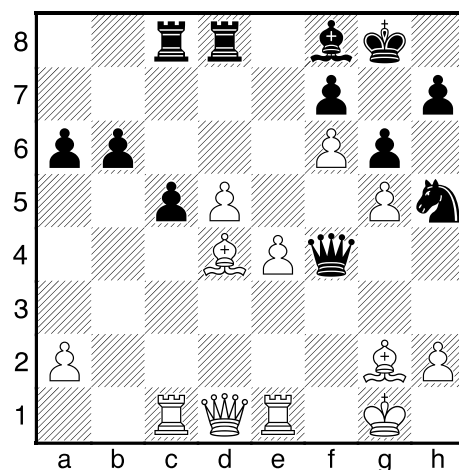
19.f6 ♙f8

19...exd4?! 20.fxe7 ♙xe7 21. ♘d5 ♙xd5 22.exd5 ♙xg5 23.bxc5 bxc5± was something to consider, but if White plays precisely I believe the extra piece will be felt.

20.bxc5?!

We have been exchanging blunders back and forth for the past couple of moves, but my opponent makes the final one. White should have retreated with ♘f3 or ♘c2 while he could.

20...dxc5 21. ♘d5 ♙xd5 22.cxd5 exd4 23. ♙xd4 ♙f4!



This is the move that I had seen in my calculations. After this, I believe Black has a clear advantage.

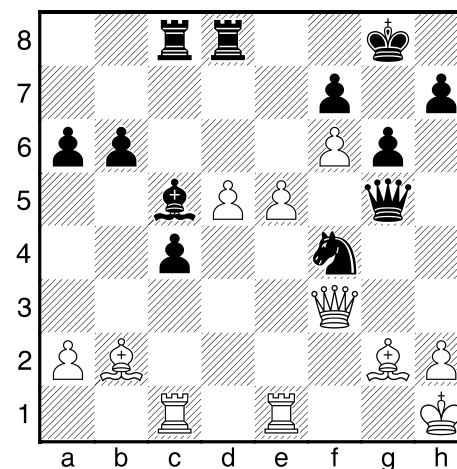
24. ♙b2

I had a feeling my opponent would sacrifice a pawn because playing 24. ♙e3 ♙e5± with ...♙d6, ..♘f4 and ...b5-c4 coming looks completely lost without counterplay.

24...♙xg5 25. ♙f3 c4 26.e5

The pawn storm is coming but I can get my Bishop out to c5 before White plays d6, fortunately.

26...♙c5+ 27. ♙h1 ♘f4



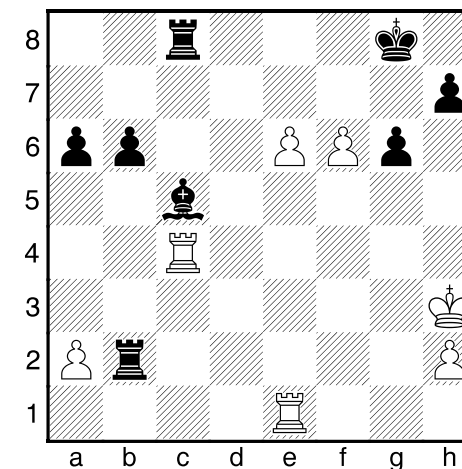
28.e6

28. ♙xc4 ♙xg2+ 29. ♙xg2 ♘xg2 30. ♙xg2 ♙xd5±.

28...♙xg2+ 29. ♙xg2 ♘xg2

30. ♙xg2 fxe6 31.dxe6 31. ♙xe6 ♙xd5-+ threatening ...♙d2+ and ...♙f7 is far too easy.

31...♙d2+ 32. ♙h3 ♙xb2 33. ♙xc4



I had to be a bit careful in this position, but with an extra piece Black should be winning without too many problems.

33...♙f2 34.f7+ ♙f8 35.a4 ♙e7 36.a5 b5 37. ♙c3 h5 38. ♙d3 ♙c7 39. ♙h4 ♙f5 40. ♙e2 ♙f2+ 41. ♙h3 ♙c5 42. ♙h4 b4 43. ♙g2 ♙f2+ 44. ♙h3 ♙c3 45. ♙xc3 bxc3 46. ♙xg6 c2 47. ♙g5

One last trick, hoping for stalemate ideas after ...♙xg5.

47...c1♙

Threatening ...♙f1#. My opponent resigned here.

This win suddenly put me in a great position to play for a norm – I had great chances until





round 8 where I played a GM with White and lost. I think that if I had won that game I would have certainly made the norm. Nevertheless, this was good foreshadowing for Iceland!

0-1

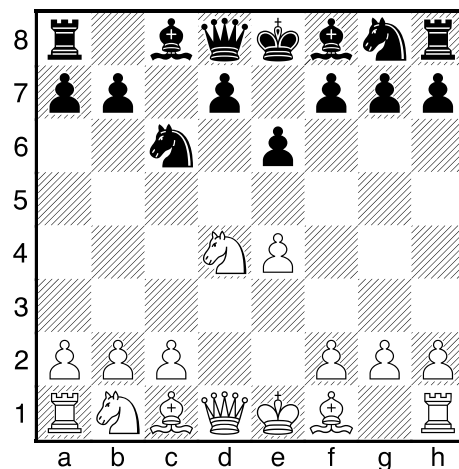
Notes by
IM Aman Hambleton
Shirov, Alexei (2693)
Hambleton, Aman
(2434)

B48

Reykjavik Open (4), 21.04.2017

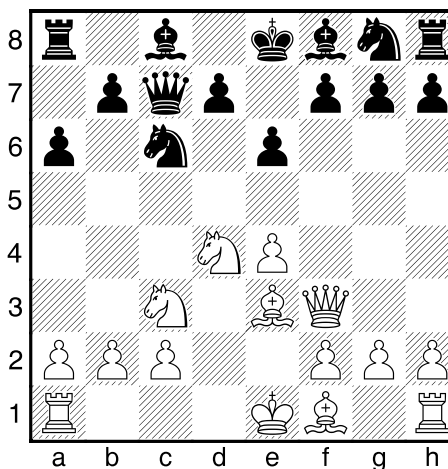
I was quite honoured and excited for my round 4 encounter against Alexei Shirov with the black pieces. Not only is he a 2700-level player and chess legend in his own right, but there would certainly be a huge style mismatch. I was planning to play the Sicilian instead of my usual, solid French. It did not seem like the smartest idea going into the game – to be honest I am not sure how I convinced myself!

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♘xd4 ♘c6



The Sicilian Taimanov is an opening I have been studying lately, and have only had a chance to test in tournament chess on a few occasions. I believe a refreshing, new approach to 1.e4 with Black is what I've been missing, and one can only play so many games with a bad Bishop in the French. :^)

5.♘c3 ♔c7
6.♙e3 a6
7.♔f3



Shirov does not go for the "main" line, but certainly the most fashionable one lately. ♔f3 was introduced a few years ago with the simple idea to play 0-0-0

very quickly and often play ♔g3, entering a favourable endgame with a lot of dark square weaknesses for Black.

7...♙d6

7...♘f6 8.0-0-0 d6∞ is another way of playing, although these structures resemble that of a Scheveningen more than a Taimanov.

8.0-0-0 ♙e5 9.g3

9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♙d4 ♙xd4
11.♖xd4 d5 12.♔g3 ♔xg3
13.hxg3 ♘f6± is a very critical line for the evaluation of this

entire opening! Shirov himself has played into this a number of times with great success, so actually the heavy majority of my preparation was specific to this endgame.



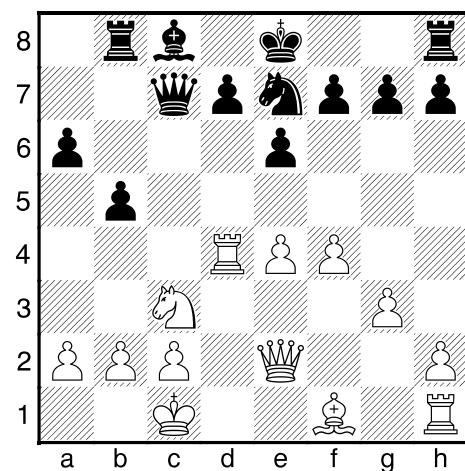
Sicilian vs Shirov!

"The best result of my career."



Chess Canada Gnome

9...♘ge7 10.♔e2 b5 11.f4
♙xd4 12.♙xd4 ♘xd4
13.♙xd4 ♖b8



This move has been seen only a handful of times, all in recent years and with good results. It is the new way of playing this variation, delaying castling in favour of Queenside counterplay.

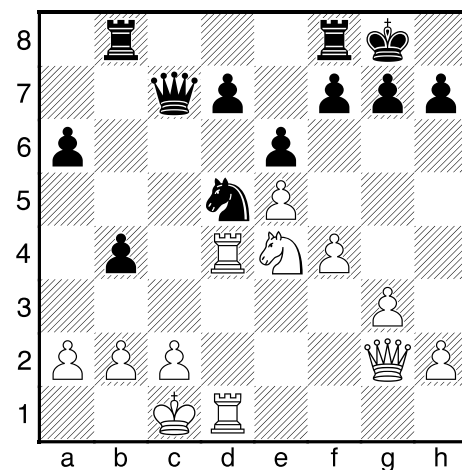
14.e5 ♙b7N

I think that the reason this move is such a powerful novelty is how surprising the main variation can be. Shirov makes extremely logical moves from this point on, but ends up in a middlegame in which I believe Black has the better attacking chances.

15.♙g2 ♙xg2 16.♔xg2 b4!
Chasing the ♘ to the e4-square,

precisely where it wants to go...

17.♘e4 0-0 18.♖hd1 ♘d5=



This was more or less the end of my preparation, although I did check what should be done

if White sacrifices his Rook in this position or anything similar. Once you realize ♖xd5 is never justified, White has a hard time dealing with a5-a4-a3. Black has easy play.

19.♔f3

Shirov had used about an hour on the clock so far, and continued to spend more and more time likely calculating ♖xd5 and being frustrated that nothing works: 19.♖xd5 exd5 20.♘d6 ♙c6 21.♔xd5 (21.♖xd5 a5→) 21...♔xd5 22.♖xd5 f6 23.♘c4 g5.

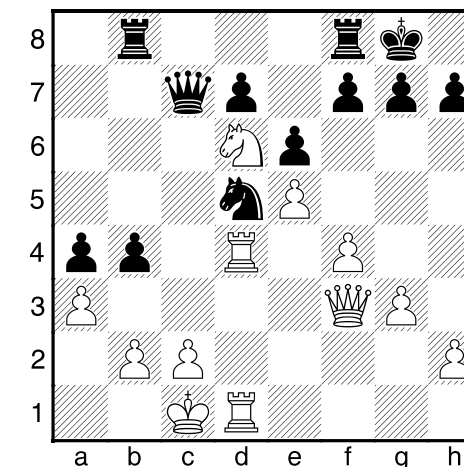
19...a5

19...♖fc8 20.♖1d2 ♔a5 21.♔b3 ♘c3 22.♘d6 ♘xa2+ 23.♔d1 ♘c3+ 24.♔e1 ♔a1+ 25.♔f2 ♔h1= is a long variation that I couldn't see until the very end. I knew that it was likely I had a perpetual but I also thought I had better chances by continuing the attack more slowly with a4-a3.

20.♘d6 a4

I continue my relatively straightforward plan of trying to play a3 and unlock the c3-square for my pieces.

21.a3



21...♔c5

21...bxa3 22.♔xa3 ♖b3 23.♔xa4 ♖bb8= sacrifices a pawn for unclear compensation but unless

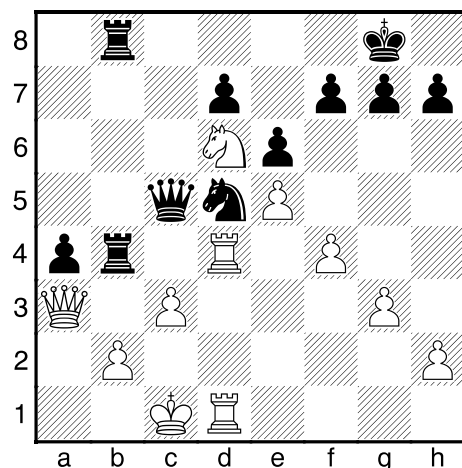




Chess Canada Gnome

I have a forced win I get nervous about those two connected pawns and the fact that I can never use the c8-square for my pieces.

22. axb4 ♖xb4 23. ♔a3 ♜fb8 24. c3



24... ♜c6!

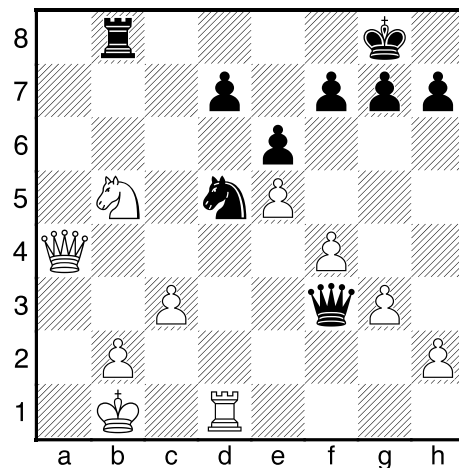
I was happy with this move: protecting a4, getting out of the annoying pin, maintaining the pin on the c3-pawn, and preparing to use the h1-a8 diagonal to reach the weakened White King in the future.

25. ♜xb4 ♜xb4 26. ♔b1 ♜f3

After I played ... ♜f3 I definitely knew that I was better, but time pressure was upon both of us, so I had to (and did) play extremely

accurately to maintain the edge.

27. ♜xa4 ♜d5 28. ♜b5



28... h5!

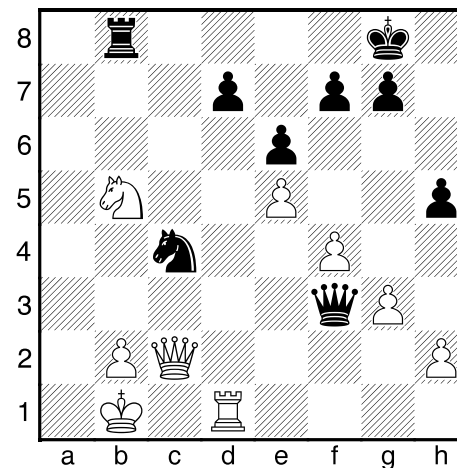
28... ♜xc3+ 29. ♜xc3 ♜xc3 30. ♜c2 ♜b4 31. ♜xd7 g6=.

Certainly not **28... ♜xb5??**
29. ♜a8+ ♜b8 30. ♜xb8#.

29. c4 ♜b6

29... ♜e3 30. ♜xd7 ♜f1+ 31. ♔a2 ♜xc4∞ is a less convincing version of what happened in the game.

30. ♜c2 ♜xc4



31. ♜xd7

I didn't consider this move because it felt too greedy, but Alexei played it very quickly. It's always scary when a strong player makes a quick move that you overlooked. Fortunately my intuition was correct, and it was indeed too greedy!

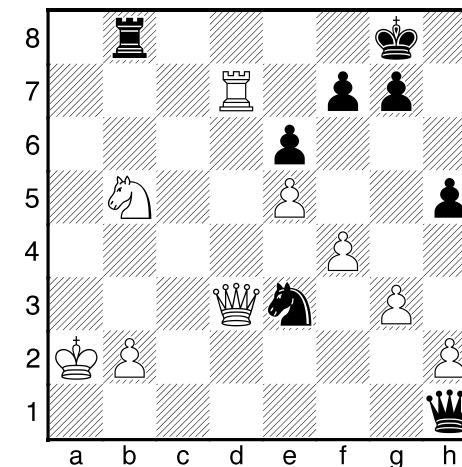
editor – White doesn't have any objectively better moves — Black wins with accurate play — so the unpleasant question for White is "what sets Black the most practical difficulties?". He might have tried **31. ♜d3 ♜h1+ 32. ♜d1 ♜c6 33. ♜d4 ♜xe5! 34. fxe5 ♜xb5**, which is also pretty horrible for White, who is down a pawn with an exposed ♔ and loose pawns... but multiple major

piece endings contain a lot of game-saving perpetuals.

31... ♜e3

31... ♜xb2! was even stronger, e.g. **32. ♜xb2 ♜f1+ 33. ♔a2 ♜xb5 34. ♜c3 ♜b8-+.**

32. ♜d3 ♜h1+ 33. ♔a2



33... ♜d5

Threatening ... ♜b4+ as well as just centralizing the ♜ on the best square and disconnecting White's heavy pieces along the d-file.

34. ♔b3

34. ♜e2 is a surprisingly resilient computer defense which I doubt either of us were remotely considering. **34... ♜b4+ 35. ♔b3 ♜c6-+.**



34...♔e1 35.♖xd5 exd5
36.♔xd5 ♔a5

Now the Knight falls by force, but that can be expected when the King is running out to c4 with Queens still on the board.

37.♔c4 ♔a4+ 38.b4 ♔a2+

Shirov resigned as I will be up an entire Rook after the Queens are exchanged on d5.

I think that this is one of my cleanest games from start to finish. Although I may have missed stronger moves, I never committed any errors, and I also managed to successfully employ a strong novelty in a main line of

a big Sicilian opening.

At 2693, beating Alexei Shirov with Black is by far the best result of my chess career. It certainly gave me the confidence that a GM norm was entirely possible in Reykjavik.

0-1

Extra version of this game in the PGN with notes by the editor

Two Kinds of Handshake

Shirov stops. L'Ami starts.



**Notes by
IM Aman Hambleton**
Hambleton, Aman
L'Ami, Erwin (2614)

A84

Reykjavik Open (5), 22.04.2017

In Round 5 of the Reykjavik Open I was paired with White against GM Erwin L'Ami. His wife Alina L'Ami is a well known ChessBase reporter and was taking pictures throughout the event. When playing such strong

players, usually it's impossible to predict exactly which opening they will use – this game was no exception.

1.d4 f5

I did not expect this opening from Erwin, although he certainly plays it often enough. I assumed he would prefer the Nimzo, considering one of the main lines I play against the Dutch in the database involves playing h4!? very early, which is not to everyone's taste as Black.

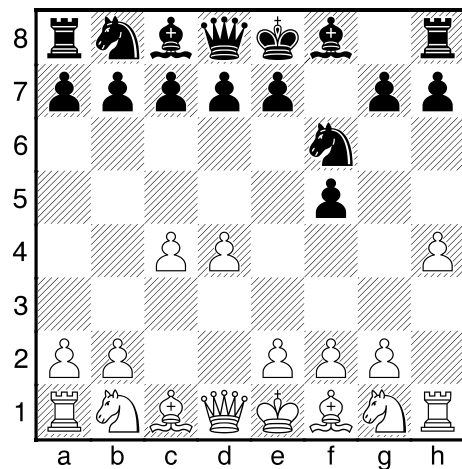




Chess Canada

Gnome

2.c4 ♘f6 3.h4



I have never really fancied the main lines against the Dutch, but just like the Grunfeld I believe the sidelines are actually a lot more testing! This move dissuades Black from playing a setup involving ...g6.

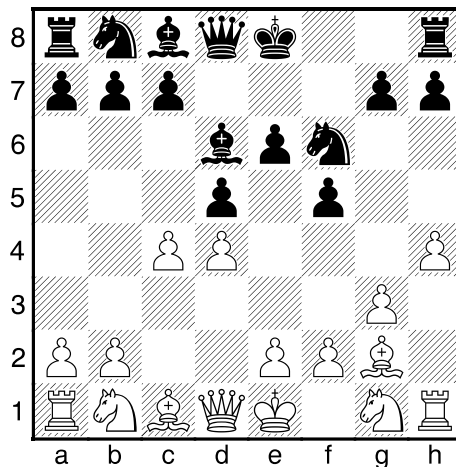
3...e6

3...g6 4.h5 ♘xh5 5.♖xh5 gxh5 6.e4± is already better for White.

4.g3

Claiming the long diagonal before Black can play ...b6, ...♗b7 and attempt to prove that the move h4 has no particular benefit for White.

4...d5 5.♗g2 ♗d6



6.cxd5

Anish Giri was giving his comments on some of the ongoing games and afterward I noticed he mentioned that the concept of h4 was not all that bad actually! However, he criticized cxd5 because White often wants to wait (e.g. with ♖c2) until Black commits ...♘bd7 in order to play cxd5 when ...exd5 would lose the f5-pawn. Here, Black can recapture with the e-pawn and he should be happy with that exchange.

6.♘f3 0-0 7.♖c2 c6 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.cxd5 cxd5±.

6...exd5 7.♘h3 0-0 8.♗f4

Trying to execute a positional concept of exchanging the dark

squared Bishops and trying to exploit the weakened dark squares in Black's camp.

8...♗e7?!

Although it's understandable Erwin wants to avoid this exchange, it may not have been the wisest decision in hindsight, especially considering we exchanged these Bishops later on anyway.

9.0-0 c6 10.♘d2 ♘e4

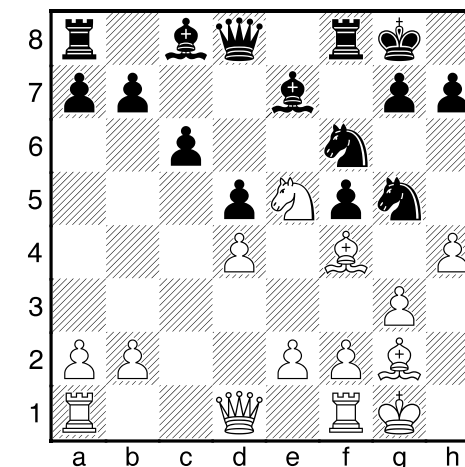
10...♖b6 11.♘b3 a5 12.♖c2 ♘bd7 13.♖ac1 a4 14.♘c5∞.

11.♘f3

It's very important for White to

avoid trading pieces on the e4-square and instead focus his attention on the e5, f4, and g5 squares.

11...♘d7 12.♘hg5 ♘df6 13.♘e5 ♘xg5



14.♗xg5





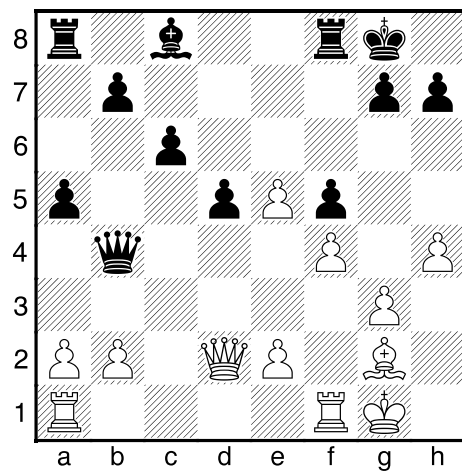
Chess Canada Gnome

14.hxg5! is actually a good option here, although it didn't seem very easy to justify over the board. 14...♘e4 15.g6 h6 16.e3± and although this pawn on g6 is very far up the board, it's not very easy for Black to target, and meanwhile the ♘e5 is dominating.

14...♘g4 15.♙d2

15.♙xe7 ♙xe7 16.♘d3 (16.♘xg4 fxg4± is also better for Black with easy play on the e and f-files and also the f5 square now available for the Bishop.) 16...f4!±.

**15...♘xe5 16.dxe5 a5
17.♙xe7 ♙xe7 18.f4 ♙b4**



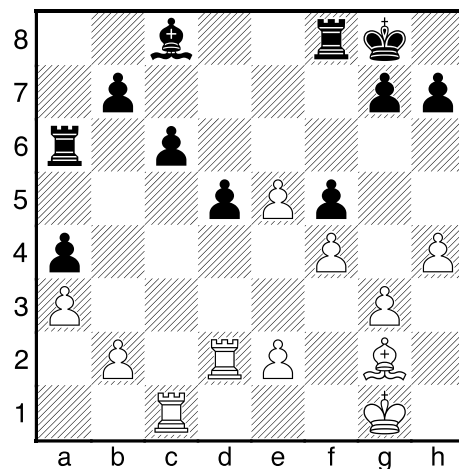
Now we reach the critical position for the endgame. It was

both the opinion of myself and my opponent that although the position was surely equal, Black had more constructive ideas involving some a4-a3 advance, and ...♖a6-b6 to target my Queenside, or simply supporting a well-timed ...c5 advance. We both completely misevaluated White's chances!

19.♖fd1

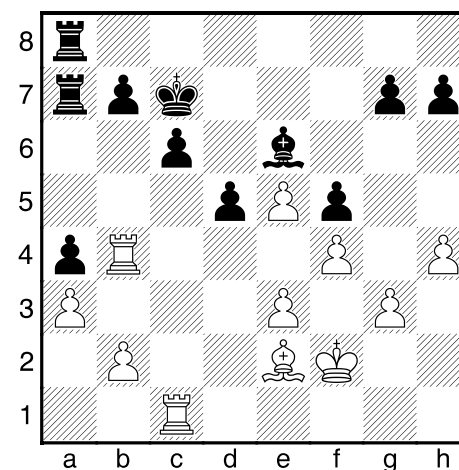
19.♙xb4 axb4 20.a3 bxa3 21.♖xa3 ♖xa3 22.bxa3 ♙e6 23.♖b1 ♖b8 24.a4 ♙c8!= Black intends to bring his King to support his Queenside pawns, meanwhile tying White down to passive defense of the isolated a-pawn.

**19...♖a6 20.a3 ♙xd2
21.♖xd2 a4 22.♖c1**



Putting pressure on all of Black's Queenside pawns so they cannot easily advance. In hindsight, I think that I was playing a bit too reactively, because I never started to develop my own counterplay until much later. I could have started that immediately with h5!

**22...♙e6 23.♖d4 ♔f7 24.♖b4
♖a7 25.e3 ♔e7 26.♙f3 ♖fa8
27.♔f2 ♔d7 28.♙e2 ♔c7**



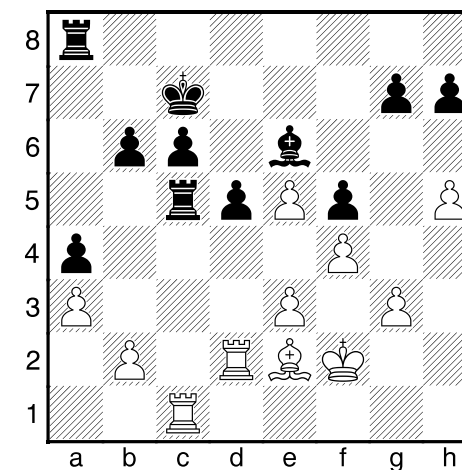
After a long journey, Black has succeeded in bringing his King over to the Queenside and now intends to advance his pawn mass and hopefully pressure b2. It finally dawned on me that White doesn't merely have counterplay on the Kingside, but in fact is essentially just winning.

29.h5! ♖a5 30.♖d4

Removing the Rook from the precarious b4 square where it can be trapped in some lines after ...c5. This Rook will sit on d2 where it protects White's only weakness (b2), while the other Rook supports the g4 advance.

30.♖g1 c5 31.♖b5 ♖xb5 32.♙xb5 c4±.

30...b6 31.♖d2 ♖c5?!



Black is trapping his own Rook without realizing it.

32.♖g1!

Now I felt as though I was winning by force over the board, or at least Black would have to commit himself to the most



passive defense possible.

32...♖f8 33.g4 ♖f7

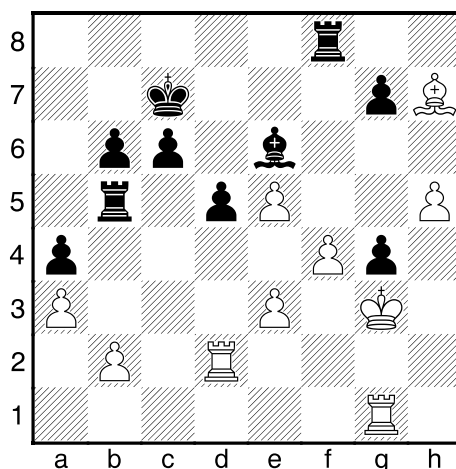
33...g6 34.♔g3± intending ♔h4-g5.

34.♕d3! fxf4 35.♕xh7 ♖f8 36.♔g3

Stepping off the f-file and away from some tactics involving ...d4. Now the threat, which is hard to stop, is f5 and if ...♕xf5 White has ♖f1 utilizing the pin. This tactic enables White to keep the initiative.

36.♕c2 d4⇒ is still winning, but certainly not the type of counterplay White needs to allow.

36...♖b5



37.f5 ♖b3 38.fxe6 ♖xe3+ 39.♔h4

39.♔xg4 ♖xe5 40.♔h4 ♖f4+ is slightly less accurate.

39...♖xe5 40.♖xg4 ♖xe6 41.♖xg7+ ♔d6 42.♖g6

White will trade the Rooks and use his extra piece to help promote the extra passed h-pawn. Black resigned with the end very near.

This game was an interesting example of how important objectivity and psychology can be in chess. Both my opponent and I were playing a position the computer believes to be significantly better for White, yet we both had the understanding that Black was pushing for a win! It is funny to think that I would have accepted a draw at any point earlier in this game, while my opponent would have never thought to offer one.

1-0

Although my game against Shirov might have been my best game, this game gave me the

most personal satisfaction during the tournament....

Notes by IM Aman Hambleton Hambleton, Aman Ramirez, Alejandro (2555)

A42

Reykjavik Open (7), 24.04.2017

In round 7 of the Reykjavik Open I was paired against a friend of mine, GM Alejandro Ramirez. It's never easy to play against people you know very well, and certainly not in a situation where you have to play for a norm! I didn't know exactly what to expect, but my main goal in the opening was not to allow any dangerous preparation.

1.d4 d6 2.e4

I was not sure if Alejandro had prepared against 2.e4 because he stopped to think in this position. I had just played a game against a strong GM at the GRENKE Chess Open just prior to Reykjavik, which continued 2...♘f6 3.f3 e5 4.dxe5. I managed to get a nice opening

advantage, although the game ended in a draw.

2...g6 3.c4 ♕g7 4.♘c3 ♘c6

Instead, ...♘f6 just transposes to the main lines of the KID. The reason for delaying the development of ♘g8 is to allow for sidelines like ...♘ge7 or a quick e5/f5 advance.

5.♕e3 e5 6.d5

6.♘ge2 exd4 7.♘xd4 ♘ge7

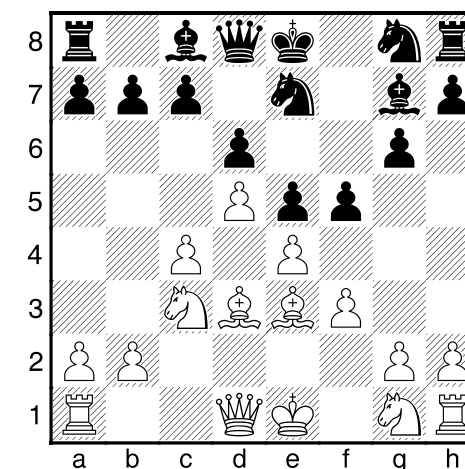
8.♕e2 0-0 9.♖d2± is another variation altogether.

6...♘ce7

6...♘d4 7.♘ge2 ♘xe2 8.♕xe2 f5

9.exf5 (Black cannot recapture with the g-pawn because of ♕h5+) 9...♕xf5 10.g4 ♕d7 11.h4±.

7.♕d3 f5 8.f3





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Since I play the Saemisch KID, this structure was the most familiar to me.

8...♗h6!?

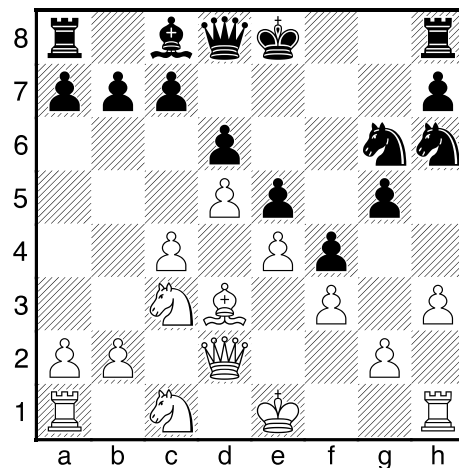
The computer dislikes this move, although it is easy for a human to understand. In exchange for misplacing the ♘ on h6 and losing a few tempi, Black exchanges off White's most powerful piece in the position and wants to lay claim to some important dark squares.

8...♘f6 9.♘ge2 0-0 10.h3± was what I was intending.

9.♗xh6 ♘xh6 10.♖d2 f4 11.♘ge2

11.h4 ♘f7 12.0-0-0± would have been more accurate, since Black's Kingside expansion is delayed quite a bit compared to the game. It felt a bit strange to disconnect my pawns though — I could not be sure that the h4-pawn would not be a target.

11...g5 12.h3 ♘g6 13.♘c1



13...♘f7

13...a5 was the move that should have been played. Alejandro told

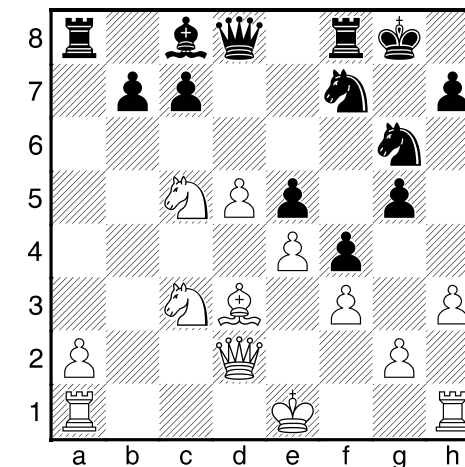
me after the game that he simply overlooked White's idea of b4 a5 bxa5! allowing enough time for ♘b3 and c5. 14.♗c2 ♗d7 15.♘d3 b6 16.0-0-0 ♘g8=.

14.b4

Although not best according to the computer, we both felt that this was an achievement for White, based on the following forced sequence...

14...a5 15.bxa5 ♖xa5 16.c5!

dxc5 17.♘b3 ♖a8 18.♘xc5 0-0



Hambleton vs Ramirez
The most nerve-wracking and intense to play.



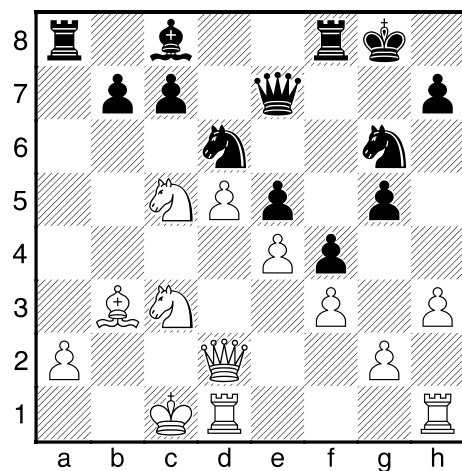
19.♙c4

19.♖c1= is given as best, but I don't find it clear where I should put my King now. The Kingside looks very dangerous and the center will not be safe forever.

19...♘d6 20.♙b3

After stationing my Bishop on what I believed to be the optimal square, I plan to play 0-0-0 and pressure along the c-file while abandoning the Kingside altogether.

20...♔e7 21.0-0-0



Strangely, the computer seriously dislikes this move, but offers no resistance to the plan I outlined above. I remain reasonably happy with this plan, despite the evaluation.

21...♗f7

21...♔h8 22.♙b1 b6 23.♘d3 ♙d7 24.♖c1∞.

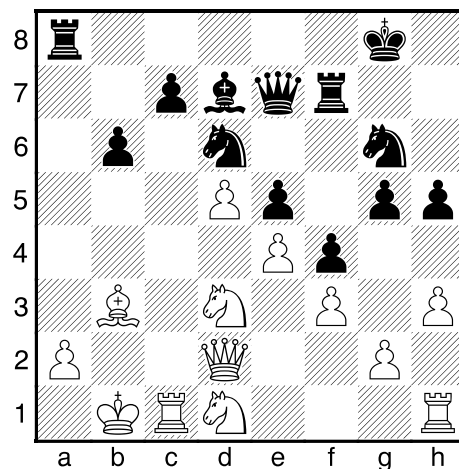
22.♙b1 b6 23.♘d3

23.♘e6!? looks too forward 23...♘f8 24.♘xf8 ♖xf8 25.♖c1 ♙d7= and I would rather have an extra pair of N's on the board since White has more space.

23...♙d7 24.♖c1 h5

Naturally, Black needs to create some counterplay with the g4 pawn break, because White has an easy plan to target c7 and slowly manoeuvre his pieces to better positions.

25.♘d1



25...♙b5

25...♘b5 takes advantage of the

♘c3 finally giving up control of b5, and looks to head to the d4 square. I think this sacrifice was critical. 26.d6 ♔xd6 27.♙xf7+ ♙xf7 28.♘c3 ♘d4±.

26.♘b4

Not allowing the ♘ to be exchanged!

26...g4?

A mistake. My opponent could feel the pressure on c7 as well as moves like ♘c6 happening in the future and – likely out of panic – desperately tried to force some counterplay.

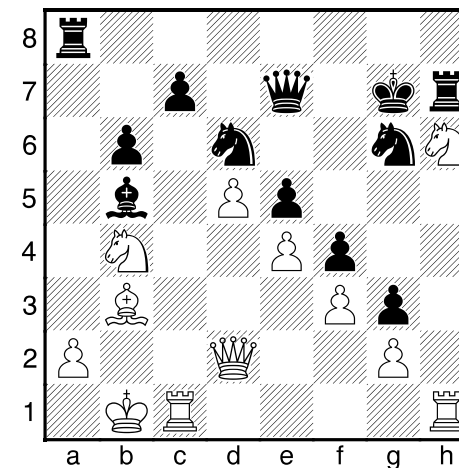
27.hxg4

27.♘c6 ♔g5 28.hxg4 hxg4 29.♘f2 g3 30.♘g4 ♔g7 although winning, this did not seem as forcing as the line I chose in the game.

27...hxg4 28.♘f2 g3 29.♘g4 ♖h7 30.♘h6+

30.♖xh7 ♔xh7 31.♔c3 ♖c8 32.♘c6 ♙xc6 33.♔xc6± Black still has a firm blockade on the dark squares – not easy to penetrate.

30...♔g7



31.♘f5+!

Beginning a forcing variation, the only path to a clear advantage.

31...♘xf5 32.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 33.exf5 ♘h4 34.d6

34.f6?! ♔xf6 35.♖xc7+ ♔h6 36.♙c2 ♔g5∞ was incredibly messy.

34...♔xd6

34...cxd6 35.♔d5 forks the Rook and Bishop, 35...♖a5 36.♔g8+ ♔h6 37.♖h1+.

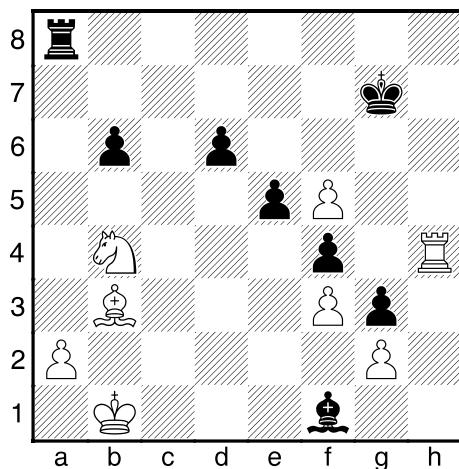
35.♔xd6 cxd6 36.♖h1

Winning a piece, although Black has a few last tricks involving the advanced g3-pawn combined with ...♙f1xg2.

36...♔g7 37.♖xh4 ♙f1



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38. ♖d5

This was a difficult move to find in time trouble, because I have to be sure that my f-pawn wins the game as I am giving up all of my Kingside pawns for this!

editor – There's a study-like win here: 38. ♖g4+ ♔f6 39. ♖g6+ ♔xf5 40. ♕c2+ e4 41. ♕xe4+ ♔e5 42. ♘c6#.

38... ♕d3+

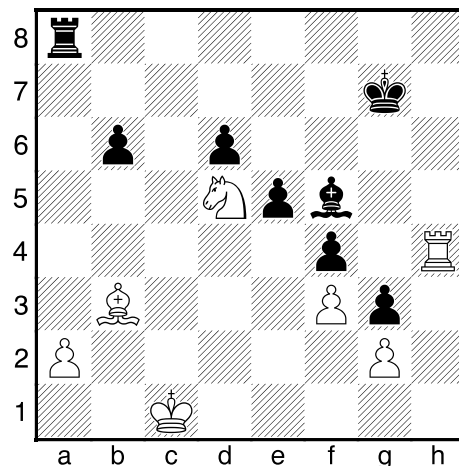
38... ♕xg2? 39. f6+ ♔g6 40. ♕c2+ ♔f7 41. ♖h7+ ♔e6 42. ♕e4+-.

39. ♔c1?

A weak move just before time control. With low time I didn't want to go into any complications and

assumed that the extra piece was winning easily. However, simple calculation shows that ♕c2 was a quicker win: 39. ♕c2 ♕xc2+ 40. ♔xc2 ♖xa2+ 41. ♔d3 ♖xg2 42. f6+ ♔f7 43. ♖h7+- queens the f-pawn very easily.

39... ♕xf5



40. ♔d2

I was trying to be too safe as I notched down my 40th move and took some deep breaths. I knew I was winning and, with this being such an important game for my GM norm

I don't think I've ever been up a clean piece and had so much trouble converting.

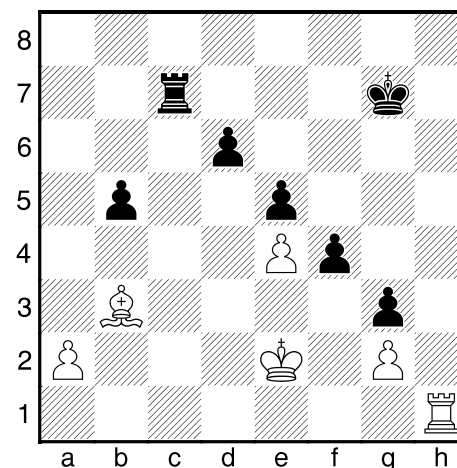
situation, I was definitely feeling the pressure to convert.

40. ♘xb6 could have been played as well. The pawn is waiting to be captured! 40... ♖b8 41. ♘d5 ♕e6 42. ♘xf4+-.

40... b5 41. ♖h1 ♖a7 42. ♘c3 ♖a5 43. ♘e4 ♖a7 44. ♔e2

After this move I strongly believed that my opponent would resign, because I didn't see any options for Black other than ... ♕xe4. Trading pieces when you're down a piece already seemed as good as resigning.

44... ♕xe4 45. fxe4 ♖c7



After this move, I had a long think because, to my surprise, this position was not simple at

all. I don't think I've ever been up a clean piece and had so much trouble converting – certainly a credit to my resilient and resourceful opponent.

46. ♖d1 ♖c3 47. ♔d2

47. ♖xd6 ♖e3+ 48. ♔d2 ♖xe4 looked like it was allowing too much counterplay with 3 connected pawns and the looming threat of f3 gxf3 g2. 49. ♕c2 ♖e3 50. ♕d3+-.

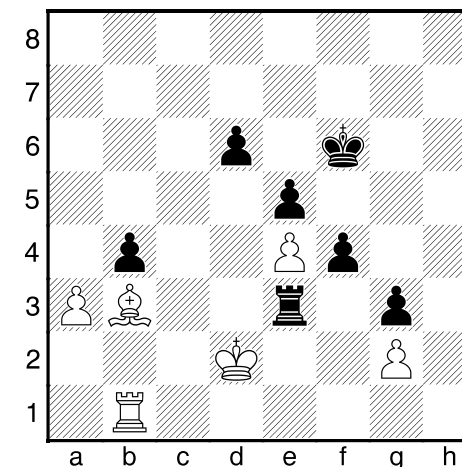
47... b4 48. ♖b1

Intending a3 or a4 because the Rook would be hanging on c3.

48... ♔f6 49. a3

49. a4 f3 50. gxf3 g2 51. ♕d5+- was also winning.

49... ♖e3





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50.a4!

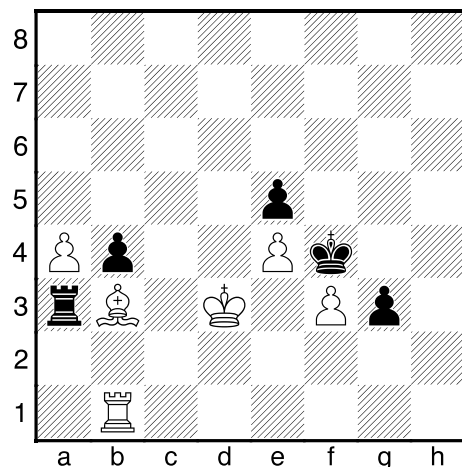
Now that the Rook is on e3, f3 is no longer possible and the Rook also has a long way to travel to cover the a8-square.

50.axb4!? ♖xe4 51.b5 f3!
52.gxf3 ♖b4= Black always had resources like this that were scary to calculate.

50...d5

50...♖xe4 51.a5+- and funnily enough, the Rook has trapped itself in the middle of the board.

51.♙xd5 ♖a3 52.♙b3 ♔g5
53.♔d3 f3 54.gxf3 ♔f4



55.♔c4

The final touch. ♙b3 trapped the Black Rook and now the King comes to collect all the material.

55...♙xf3 56.♔xb4 ♖xa4+
57.♙xa4 ♔xe4 58.♙c6+

White has too much extra material and finally, after a long fight and great resistance by Ramirez, I managed to secure the victory and move to 5.5/7, just shy of the leaders.

This game was definitely the most nerve-wracking and intense to play, even though I had been playing opponents rated much higher than 2550. Although my game against Shirov might have been my best game, this game gave me the most personal satisfaction during the tournament.

1-0

Notes by
IM Aman Hambleton
Hambleton, Aman
Van Foreest, Jorden
(2584)

E86
Reykjavik Open (8), 25.04.2017

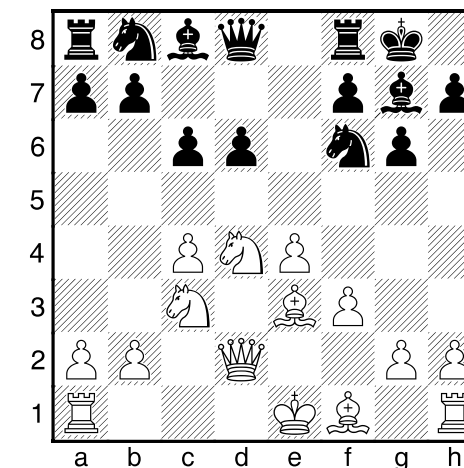
Besides my only loss in the event (a very early blunder

against [GM Movsesian](#) 2677), the other game where I was in big trouble was in round 8 against the young Dutch talent and current Dutch Champion [GM Jorden Van Foreest](#). He's also a good friend of mine and even competed on the Montreal Chessbrah PROchess team for a few matches. Having just won my previous game, I had 5.5/7 and was in great shape to secure a norm with either 0.5 or 1 point in the next few games.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3
♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3

I employed the Saemisch variation of the KID, something which I have done as long as I can remember in the database. Naturally, this type of guaranteed repetition allows for my opponents to prepare extremely deep variations for me.

5...0-0 6.♙e3
e5 7.♘ge2 c6
8.♙d2 exd4
9.♘xd4



So far my opponent had been moving instantly, and although I knew the opening theory as well, I was hesitant. I knew that my opponent had prepared a dangerous variation, but I couldn't identify where it would be.

9...d5!?

Spoiler?





9...♖e8 is usually included before trying to play ...d5, in order to prevent White's response cxd5 and e5. 10.♖d1 d5 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.♘c2±.

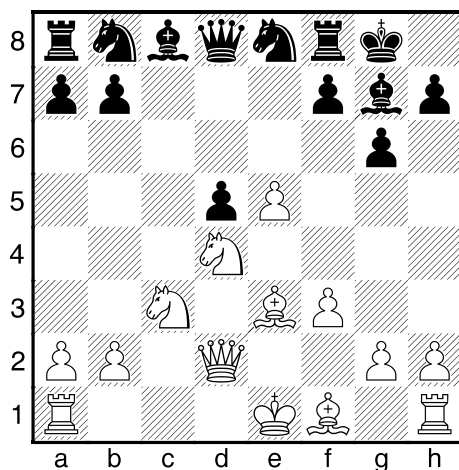
10.cxd5

10.exd5 cxd5 11.g4 ♘c6∞.

10...cxd5 11.e5

The most natural reaction, forcing Black's ♘ to move to the undesirable e8-square.

11...♘e8



12.f4

12.♗g5 ♖d7 13.♗b5 ♘c6 14.♖c1 ♘c7= gives Black great play against a loose pawn center.

12...f6 13.exf6

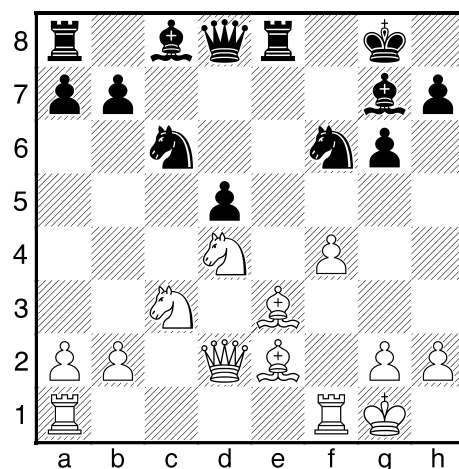
13.e6 is a major alternative,

which I knew about, but I didn't have any specific preparation here and it felt risky to enter a line where I am sacrificing a pawn (often two!) without any guidelines. 13...♘c6 14.f5 gxf5 15.♗e2 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4 ♗xe6 17.0-0∞.

13...♘xf6 14.♗e2

It is necessary to control the important g4-square.

14...♘c6 15.0-0 ♖e8



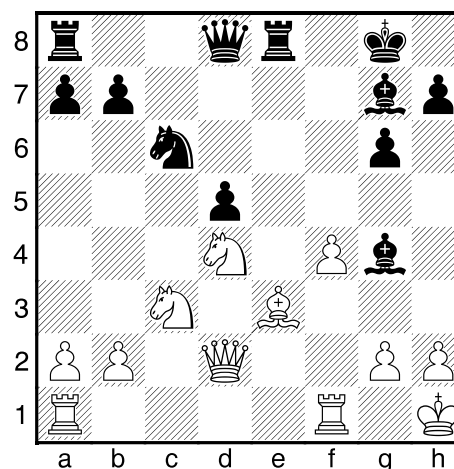
Although none of the moves are incredibly difficult, I should stress that my opponent was moving instantly and I was spending a lot of time calculating the many complicated sacrifices involving ...♖xe3. It's always scarier to play a position when you know

your opponent has so recently seen the computer evaluation at home!

16.♖h1

16.♖ad1 ♘g4 17.♗xg4 ♗xg4 18.♖de1 ♖xe3 19.♘xc6 bxc6 20.♖xe3 d4 looked very powerful, but it turns out that White can salvage equality e.g. 21.♖g3 dxc3 22.♖xg4 ♖b6+ 23.♖h1 cxb2 24.f5=.

16...♘g4 17.♗xg4 ♗xg4



18.♗f2

18.f5 ♖xe3 19.♘xc6 bxc6 20.♖xe3 ♗xf5∞ is what my opponent told me was the end of his preparation. The computer gives 0.00 but Black clearly has great compensation with the pair of Bishops, mobile pawn center,

and open b-file.

18.♗g1 ♖f6 19.♘xd5 ♖d8 20.♘f3 ♗xf3 21.gxf3 may have just been a slightly improved version of what happened in the game.

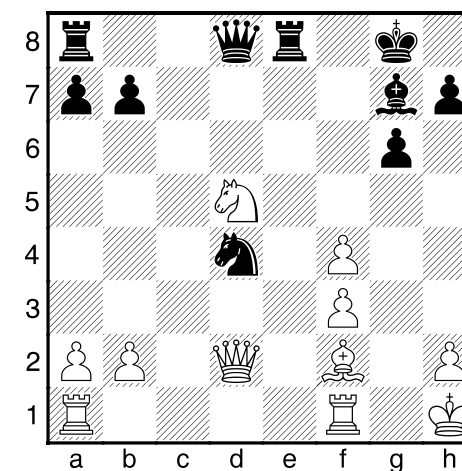
18...♖f6 19.♘xd5

Simplifying into a slightly worse endgame, but I considered that the lesser of the evils, bearing in mind that I was down more than an hour on the clock.

19...♖d8 20.♘f3

20.♘e3 ♖xe3 21.♖xe3 ♘xd4∞ does not seem correct. Black's pair of Bishops, two pieces for the Rook, and control of the d1-square seem overwhelming.

20...♗xf3 21.gxf3 ♘d4





Chess Canada Gnome

A strong move, but not one I had missed. Unfortunately, Black's opening has been a massive success and now he is enjoying a slightly better endgame with more than an hour ahead on the clock. All these things combine to create a position that should be losing in practical play, especially considering the psychological factors that almost the entire game has been preparation!

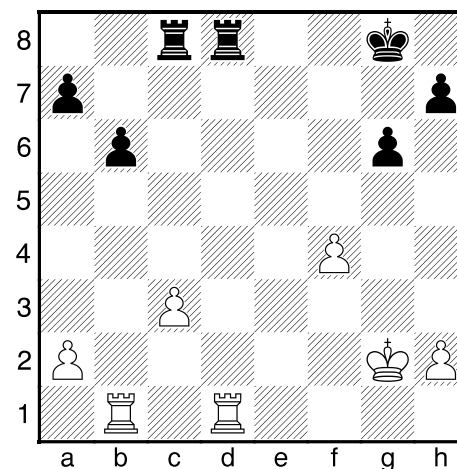
**22.♘c3 ♘xf3 23.♔xd8
♖exd8 24.♖fd1**

24.♖ad1 ♘d2 25.♙h4! a move I had missed 25...♖d4 26.♙f2
♖d3 27.♖fe1 ♙xc3 28.bxc3 ♘e4
Black is still clearly better.

**24...♘d4
25.♙xd4**

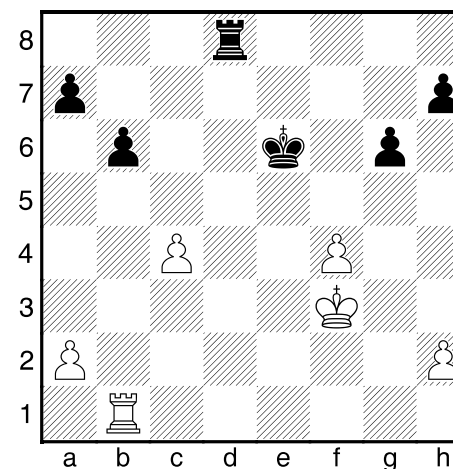
Simplifying again, mostly because of the time situation. I assumed the closer I got to a rook endgame the better chances I stood to make a draw, but that is not always the case.

**25...♙xd4 26.♔g2 ♖ac8
27.♖ab1 ♙xc3 28.bxc3 b6**



Although the material is exactly level, there is no endgame more unpleasant than the one that stands before me. White has 4 pawn islands and they are all isolated pawns.

**29.c4 ♔f7 30.♔f3 ♔e6
31.♖xd8 ♖xd8**



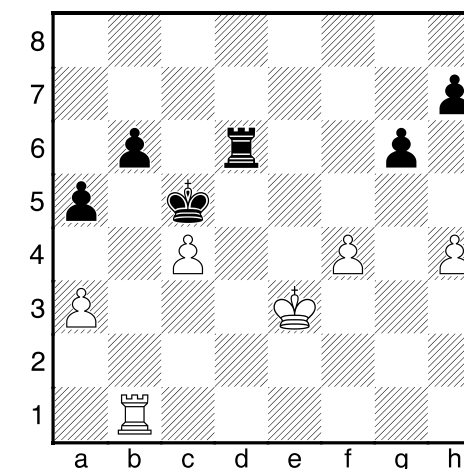
The computer offers an evaluation of a mere -0.4 but I considered this position to be completely lost.

32.♔e3

32.♖b3 is the magic move apparently, ruthlessly searching for counterplay with ♖a3:
32...♖c8
33.♖e3+ ♔f6
(33...♔d6
34.♖d3+
♔c6 35.h4=)
34.♖a3 ♖c7
35.♖a6= with

Black's rook passive and the idea to play c5.

**32...♖c8 33.♖b4 ♔d6
34.♔d4 ♖f8 35.♔e4 ♔c5
36.a3 ♖e8+ 37.♔d3 ♖d8+
38.♔e3 ♖d6 39.h4 a5
40.♖b1**



I finally made the time control, playing the last 10 moves on increment, but was now faced with a lost endgame. I decided to play on out of spite and self pity mostly.

**40...♔xc4 41.h5 b5 42.♖c1+
♔b3 43.♖c7 gxh5**
editor – 43...♔xa3! also wins, but Black has to trust (or calculate) that he gets the first check after both sides promote: 44.h6 b4
45.♖xh7 b3 46.♖g7 (46.♖b7



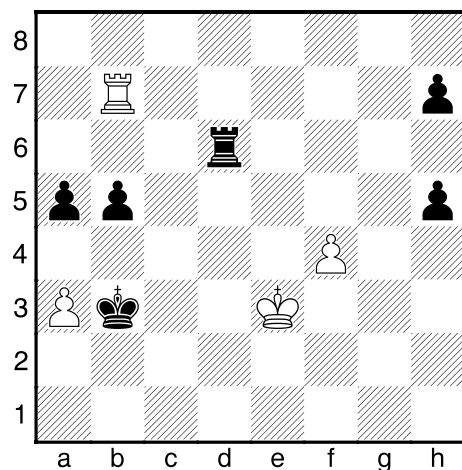


Chess Canada

Gnome

♖d8-+) 46...b2 (46...♖d1 going to h1 also wins.) 47.h7 b1♙ 48.h8♙ ♙e1+ and this first check leads to mate.

44.♖b7

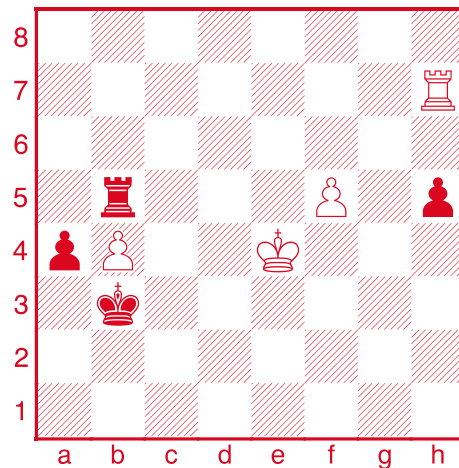


I realized my only hope for a draw was to liquidate pawns on the Queenside, collect the remaining pawns on the Kingside, and somehow manage to sacrifice my Rook for the remaining pawn.

44...b4!? 45.axb4 a4 46.♖xh7

At this point both my opponent and I had the impression Black may have ruined his winning chances. Jorden had a very long think here and came up with the accurate...

46...♖d5! 47.♙e4 ♖b5 48.f5



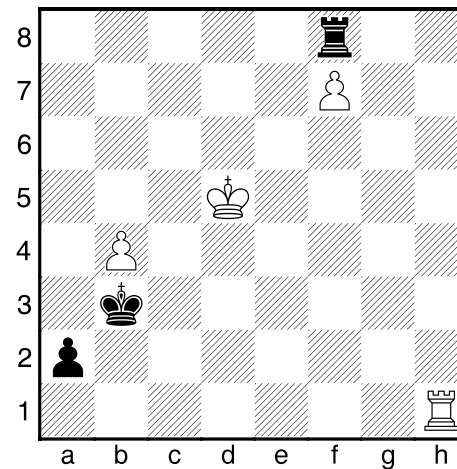
48...h4?

48...♖xb4+□ wins the game
49.♙e5 (49.♙d5 h4 50.f6 a3 51.f7 ♖f4 access to the f4-square is the major difference between this variation and what happened in the game. 52.♙e5 ♖f2 53.♙e4 a2 54.f8♙ ♖xf8 55.♖b7+ ♙c2 56.♖a7 ♙b2 57.♖b7+ ♙a1 wins for Black.) 49... h4 50.f6 a3 51.f7 a2 52.f8♙ a1♙+ the check ensures that Black can deliver a checkmate.

49.f6□=

Now the game is drawn.

49...a3 50.f7 ♖b8 51.♖xh4 a2 52.♖h1 ♖f8 53.♙d5!



The move my opponent missed, reminded us of a famous endgame study where White's King starts on h8 and manages to assist his passed pawn on c6 while catching Black's passed pawn on h5!

53...♖xf7 54.b5 ♖h7 55.♖a1 ♖h5+ 56.♙c6 ♙b2

57.♖xa2+ ♙xa2 58.b6 ♖h6+ 59.♙c7 ♖xb6 60.♙xb6

This miraculous draw was the final notch I needed for the GM norm. I did not know right after the game that it would be enough, as it depended entirely on the ninth round pairing, but I knew that I had been extremely lucky in this game. A definite lesson to stay realistic and continue playing as long as you believe there are chances for your opponent to slip up.

1/2-1/2

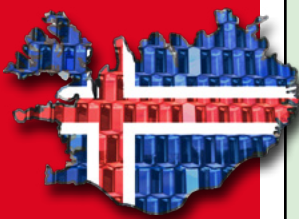
Jorden went on to win his final two rounds in convincing fashion and finished in 2nd place in the Reykjavik Open, while I went on

to score 7/10 after drawing my final two rounds and securing my 10-round GM norm!



Relief!

Aman knows he dodged a bullet.



The **2017 Reykjavik Open** was a 10-round Open Swiss from April 19-27, 2017. **Anish Giri** was the sole winner, with 8.5/10, 1½ point ahead of GMs **van Foreest**, **Movsesian**, **Gupta** and **Kamsky**.

15 Canadians played in Reykjavik, performing well as a group — +285 FIDE rating points in total — *and* individually:

- IM **Aman Hambleton** scored his second GM Norm (see GM 2),
- FM **Michael Kleinman** scored his second IM Norm,
- **Johshua Doknjas** was 2nd in both U2200 and Junior categories, and
- the not-so-underrated-anymore **Neil Doknjas** took home 124 FIDE rating points!

Chess Canada has four annotated games.

Notes by
FM John Doknjas
Harika, Dronavalli (2521)
Doknjas, John (2216)

D00

Reykjavik Open (2), 20.04.2017

The 2017 Reykjavik Open was played in the exquisite Harpa Conference Centre. Almost all of the building is completely transparent, as its four sides are covered with intricate glass designs (which are **illuminated** into various colours at night!). This provided a wonderful view of Reykjavik while playing in the tournament hall. The hall itself

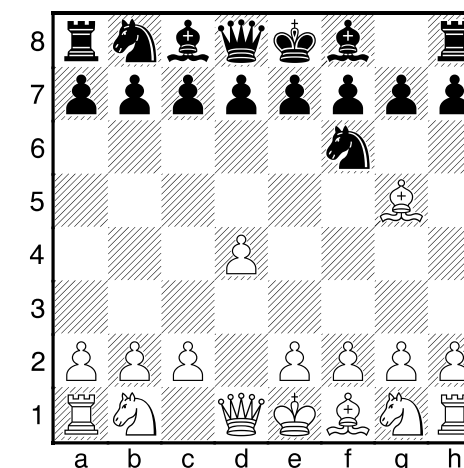
was quite large — there was ample room for the hundreds of players, as well as a generous amount of space for the players on the tables. The distance between me and my board was probably around a whole foot! For most of the tournament, there was only one round per day. This allowed my family and I to spend a good amount of time touring Reykjavik and its surrounding areas. The best sights we saw were definitely the geysers – explosive bursts of water and steam from the

ground, generated by the vast amounts of thermal energy underneath Iceland.

I found out I was paired with my opponent on the night before – since the rounds were in the afternoon, this gave me 6 hours to prepare. I typically used less than 1, and despite my opponent being a GM this round was no exception :) My

opponent, like most GMs, plays multiple openings. However, unlike most GMs, she had finished 3rd in the Women's World Championship. My time was spent reviewing my general repertoire against her lines, so I didn't have much time to prepare anything too specific. I went into the game just wanting to play well.

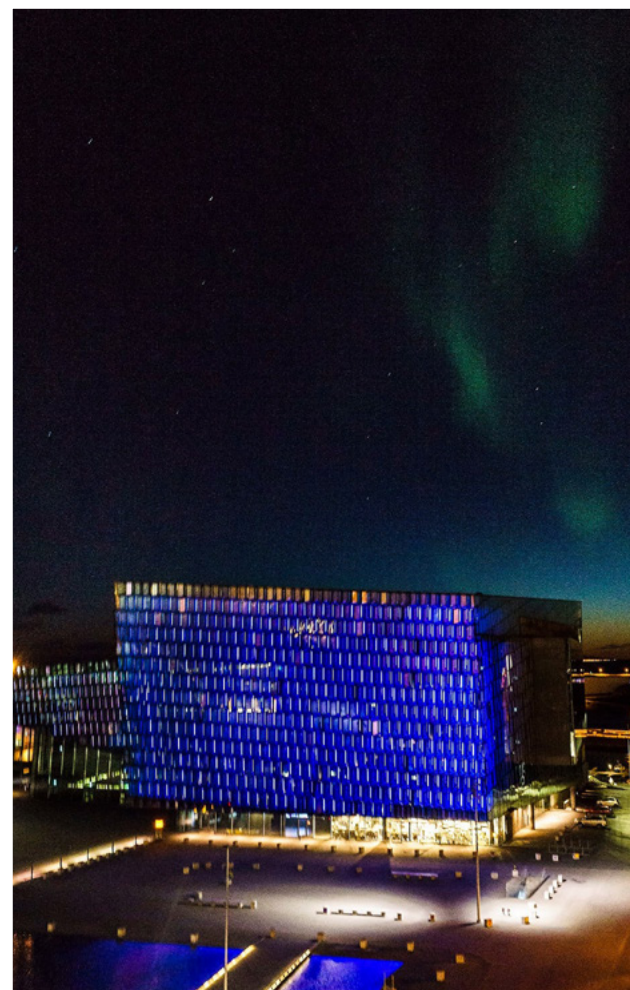
1.d4 ♞f6 **2.♙g5**

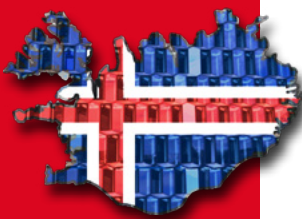


There goes my hour of preparation!

2...c6

A solid line, similar to the 2...d5 variation. Black's idea is to take back on f6 with the e-pawn, and then attempt to construct a vise on the center.





Chess Canada Gnome

3. ♖xf6

3.e3?? ♔a5+. Don't be one of the dozen players who ended up here as White!

3...exf6 4.e3 d5 5.g3?!

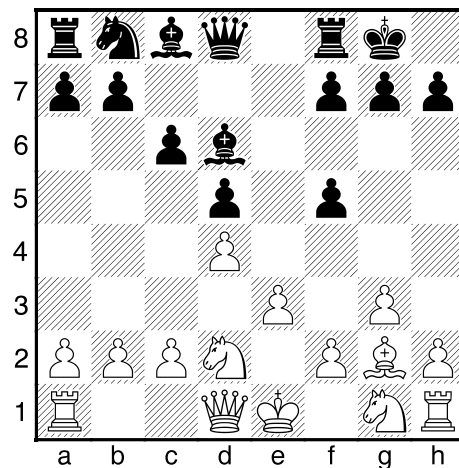
A questionable move – the light squares in White's camp are now noticeably weak. This is due to the e3-g3 pawn placement, which weakens the Kingside and f1-a6 light squares. White's f1-Bishop can only cover so much.

Both 5.c4 and ♖d3 are standard.

5...♖d6

6. ♖g2 0-0

7. ♘d2 f5



Following the tried-and-true plan. Although my c8-Bishop is now very poor, my control

over the center compensates fully for this. The lack of mobility of White's three minor pieces balances out with my bad Bishop.

8. ♘e2

With the idea of putting the Knight on f4 and pressuring my center.

8...♖e6

Putting the Bishop to at least some use – on this square it

protects my two key pawns, as well as discouraging White's c4 pawn thrust.

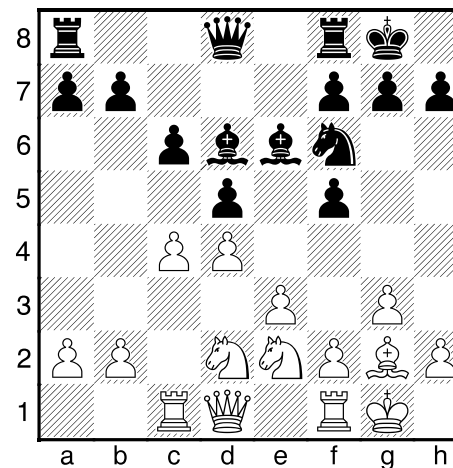
9. 0-0 ♘d7

Heading towards f6.

10. ♖c1!

Preparing the c4 move – without it, White is helpless against Black's center.

10...♘f6 11.c4



11...♘e4

With my d5 pawn under more pressure, I cannot have White's g2 Bishop continuing to rain down fire on it.

11...dxc4!? is another plan. 12. ♘xc4 ♖c7 with a weird position – White has the two center pawns, but it is Black who seems to control more of the center squares. This control, along with the two Bishops, more or less dynamically balance the game.

12.cxd5 cxd5

A sad necessity... or is it? During the game I believed that maintaining my powerful Knight on e4 was more important than having an isolated pawn on d5.

FM John Doknjas





But now I'm not so sure.

12...♙xd5 13.♘xe4 ♙xe4 14.d5 ♙xg2 15.♔xg2± White should be a tad better – Black's pawn on f5, which was once a proud soldier, now stands out like a sore thumb.

13.♘b3!

Black's Queenside squares begin to feel uncomfortable.

13...b6

The point of White's previous move – my a6 and c6 squares are now weak. Although I still have my light-square Bishop to defend them, at the moment it is rather occupied on e6. The isolated d5 pawn turns out to be more trouble than expected...

14.♘f4 ♙xf4?

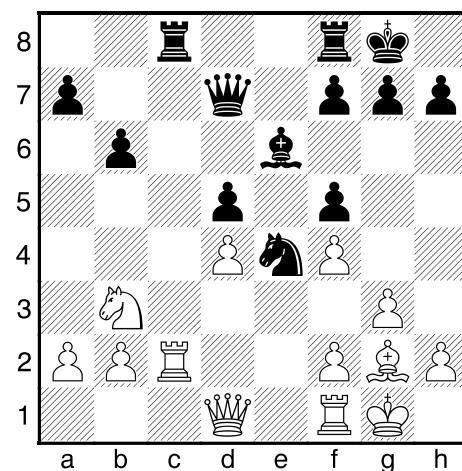
Buckling under the pressure – that's what playing a GM does to you! Giving up my dark-squared Bishop is a bad mistake, as now I'm left with only a bad Bishop on e6. Comparing the g2 and e6 Bishops, it is obvious that White's is superior – although at the moment, both are equally inactive.

14...♙d7 is more natural, and much stronger. Black will move the Rooks to the c-file, and enjoy a comfortable position.

15.exf4

15.gxf4 Another option, in order to not isolate the d4 pawn. My opponent may have avoided this because her King is now opened. However, this could work to White's advantage if she manages to move the f1-Rook to the now open g-file.

15...♙d7 16.♖c2 ♖ac8



At this point White's advantage seems merely symbolic – my Bishop on e6 is terrible, but it's difficult to see how White will activate the g2 Bishop.

editor – Interestingly, all the top engines rate this position as slightly better for Black; apparently (based on some tests shuffling around pieces) that's mainly because White's ♘b3 is misplaced.

17.♖e2!?

Sharpening the game! This move gives Black full control of the c-file, and in return White plans to control the e-file. The game becomes a positional race – who can use their file faster?

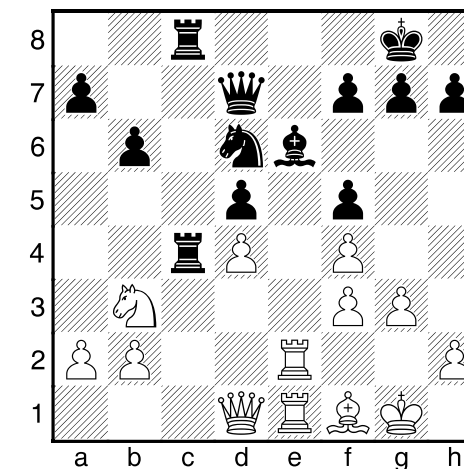
17...♖c4!

Preparing to double on the c-file, while also attacking the isolated d4 pawn. I remembered having some ideas with ...♙a4, which employs a double attack against a2 and d4.

18.f3

What else? There was no point in surrendering the c-file if this move was not played.

18...♘d6 19.♖fe1 ♖fc8 20.♙f1!



A subtle, but extremely strong move — one which I completely missed. White prepares to activate her light-square Bishop, while at the same time repel Black's c4 Rook. White will soon demonstrate utter domination with the Bishops, so using my activity while it lasts was imperative here.

20...♖4c6?

Too passive – dynamic play is required. 20...♙c7! 21.♖d2 ♖c2 with enough play to keep me actively fighting.

21.♖f2

Opening up the dormant piece on f1, and pressuring my weak Queenside squares. Did my opponent plan ahead to this

moment with 13.♘b3?

21.♖d2 is more or less identical to ♖f2, except it supports d4.

21...a5!

I remember being worried about g4 ideas from White, followed by a pawn storm. As a result, I felt quick activity on the Queenside was needed. In retrospect, most of my worries about a pawn storm were simply ghosts, but in this case seeing ghosts helped me play the right move.

22.♙b1

Preparing the retreat ♘c1.

22...a4 23.♘c1 ♙c7

The game begins to shift to my favour now. My complete control of the c-file, along with the activity it brings, fully compensates for White's superior Bishop.

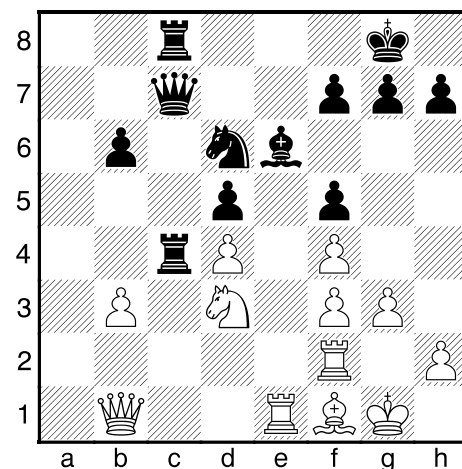
24.♘d3 ♖c4

Attacking the d4 pawn – this move also provokes b3, although I can't remember if that was my goal during the game.

25.b3 axb3?!

Opening up the a-file gives White an avenue of activity there. Better was: 25...♖c3 26.bxa4 ♖a8.

26.axb3



26...♖c2

Backing out and choosing the safe move, although it turns out this move is not safe for me at all...

I considered 26...♖xd4 during the game, but after a long think I backed out of it. My Rook is trapped on d4, and while I try to fish it out White will be invading on the a-file. I felt I could not use my extra pawn in time.

27.♖xc2 ♙xc2 28.♙xc2 ♖xc2 29.♖c1

What to do now? If I keep the Rooks on, White gets full control of the c-file. If I exchange Rooks, White has an obvious advantage in the endgame.

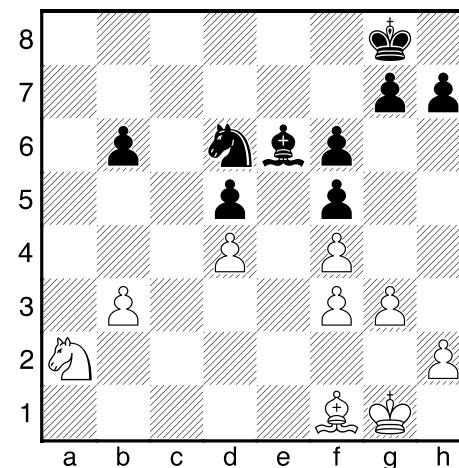
29...♖xc1 30.♘xc1

White's light-square Bishop bares its teeth and awakens for the second time.

30...f6

Preventing White's Knight from jumping to e5. The last thing I want is to have two inferior minor pieces – one is enough!

31.♘a2



31...♗c8?

My idea was to put the Bishop on b7, and King on e6. If I accomplished this, I figured my

position should be holdable. In retrospect, this move caused me quite some grief on the Queenside.

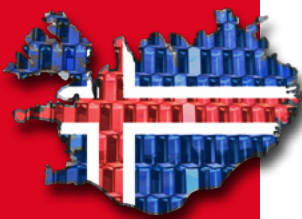
It's better to immediately bring the King to the defence of my pawns. I don't have time for the luxury of manoeuvring my Bishop. 31...♔f7 32.♘c3 ♔e7 33.♘a4 ♘c8 34.♙a6 ♘a7 35.♔f2 (35.♘xb6? ♘c6 and d4 falls – Black is equal.) 35...b5 36.♘c5 ♙c8 Black's position isn't fun, but it should not be too hard to draw. With my bad Bishop exchanged, the game will be close to equal.

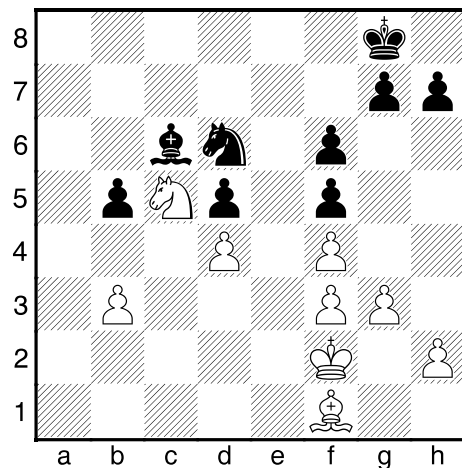
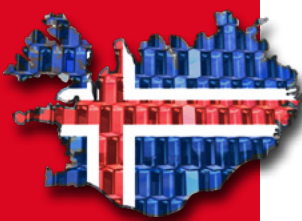
32.♘c3 ♙b7 33.♘a4 b5

A move I didn't want to play, but it is forced.

33...♘c8? 34.♙b5 ♔f7 35.♙d7 ♔e7 36.♙xc8 ♙xc8 37.♘xb6 is even worse than my position in the game – my bad Bishop is almost useless against White's powerful Knight.

34.♘c5 ♙c6 35.♔f2





35...b4!

Giving up a pawn, but providing me with an interesting fortress. I think this move gave me some nice practical chances.

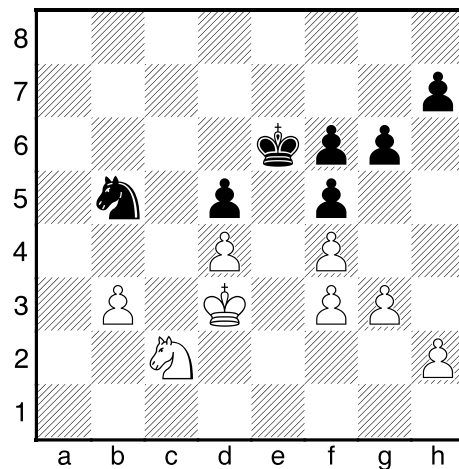
35...♔f7 36.♔e3 ♔e7 37.♔d2 g6 38.♔c3 ♔d8 39.♔b4 Black's position is horrible – White is positionally dominating on all levels.

36.♞a6 ♞b5 37.♞xb4 ♞xf1 38.♞xf1 ♞b5

My idea is to put pressure on d4, while blocking White's passed pawn. My hope is that White cannot protect d4 and make meaningful progress at the same time.

39.♞c2 ♔f7 40.♔e2 ♔e6

41.♔d3 g6



Now the waiting begins...

42.♞e3!

A strong move – the Knight pressures my pawns, while preparing the g4 break.

42...h5!

An instructive endgame move – this move forces White to play h3 if she ever wants to push g4. This will allow me to exchange an extra pair of pawns when the break happens. When you are defending an endgame, having fewer pawns on the board generally makes your defence easier.

43.b4?!

This might be a bit impatient – White should only push this pawn when the White King is ready to sprint to a4. Now I get the c4 square for my Knight.

43...♞d6

The Dark Knight returns! From d6, the Knight protects the f5-pawn, prepares to jump to c4 if needed, and stops White's pawn from advancing to b5.

44.♞d1?

Another slight inaccuracy. By moving the Knight back, it gives me the opportunity to move my King to the Queenside.

44.♔c3 was better – when White brings the King to a4, it is difficult to suggest a plan of defence for Black. My pieces are completely tied down.



editor – but now Black has 44...♖b5+ and White has to go back or lose her d-pawn.

44...♖d7

Black's King is no longer really needed on the Kingside, and stopping White's passed pawn is far more important.

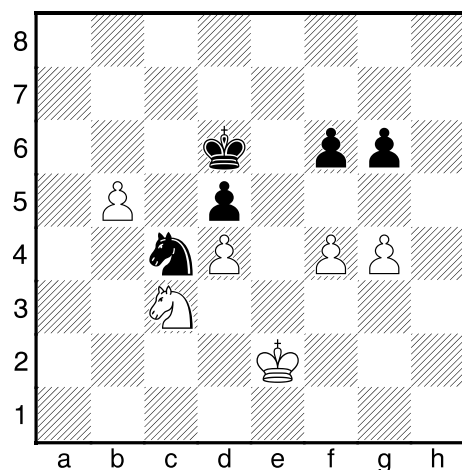
45.♘c3 ♖c6 46.♖c2 ♘c4

Preparing to target White's Kingside pawns, if White's King continues its journey to a4.

47.b5+ ♖d6 48.♖d3 ♘b2+ 49.♖e2 ♘c4 50.h3 ♘b6

And again, I have to wait. However, my position has improved compared to what I had on the 41st move.

51.g4 hxg4 52.fxg4 fxg4 53.hxg4 ♘c4



54.g5?!

It would have been more prudent for White to bring her King further up the Kingside before playing this advance. I think impatience with not being able to break my fortress yet was having an effect on my opponent.

54.♖f3 ♘b6 55.♖g3 ♘c4 56.♖h4 ♘b6 and only now 57.g5 when I don't have the option of taking on g5 and liquidating a pair of pawns.

editor – This is right strategically, but instead of 56...♘b6, Black has 56...♘e3! preparing to fork from f5 if White pushes g5, or to c2 and a3 to harass White's isolated pawns.

54...fxg5 55.fxg5 ♖e6!

The King returns home to the Kingside – my goal is to tie down White's pieces in an effort to prevent my King from reaching f5.

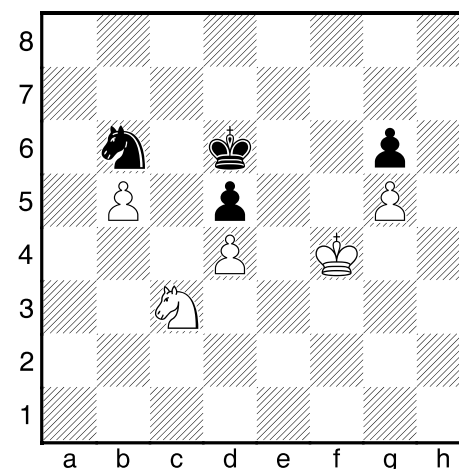
56.♖f3 ♘b6

Now ...♖f5 threatens to draw the game. Playing 56...♖f5? immediately is too risky:

57.♘xd5 ♖xg5 58.♖e4 White's extra pawn and better piece coordination promises a win.

57.♖g4 ♖d6 58.♖f4

editor – 58.♘e2 ♘d7 59.♘f4 ♘f8 and White is still not making any progress.



58...♘a8!

A venomous move, preparing to bring the Knight to e6. From this square, it will target White's g5 and d4 pawns.

59.♖g4 ♘c7 60.b6

From this point on, the game becomes a tough series of calculations taking place in a time scramble.

60...♘e6 61.♘xd5!

The only move to play for a win,

but a strong move nonetheless. The Knight is taboo due to White's b6 pawn.

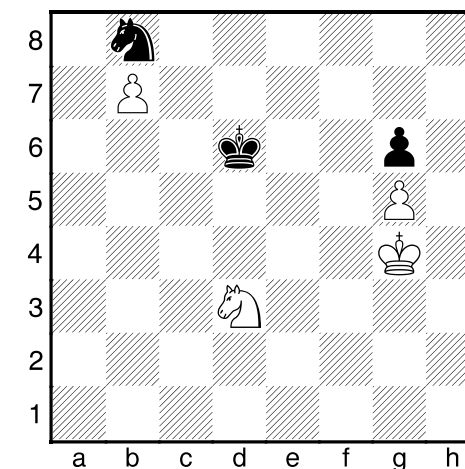
61...♘xd4

61...♖xd5?? 62.b7 a new Queen will be crowned shortly, followed by the dethroning of a certain King.

62.b7 ♘c6 63.♘b4

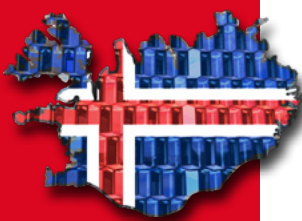
Planning to move the Knight to d3, with tempo. From that square, White's idea is to move the Knight to f4 or e5, from where it will attack g6.

63...♘b8 64.♘d3



64...♘d7!

A strong move, which I think my opponent may have missed. It is important to control the e5



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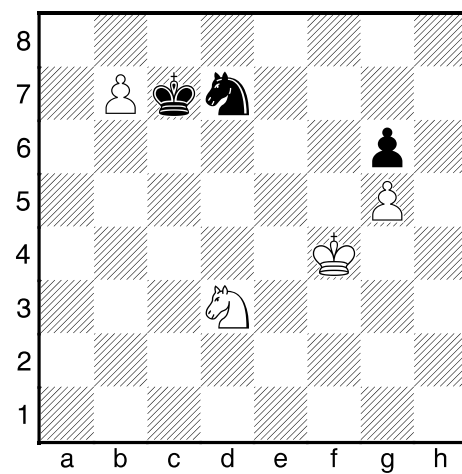
square before moving my King to capture the b7 pawn: 64...♔c7? 65.♘e5 ♔xb7 66.♘xg6 During the game it was unclear if this was losing or drawn, but White definitely has serious winning chances.

editor – Black has to play carefully, but it is a draw with either ...♘c6 or ...♘d7.

65.♔f4

65.♘f4 ♘e5+ This is why the e5 square is important! Black manages to protect the g6 pawn, and my King will take b7 in a few moves.

65...♔c7



66.♔e4

66.♘e5 ♘f8 67.♘f7 ♘e6+

68.♔e5 ♘xg5 69.♘xg5 ♔xb7=.

66...♔xb7 67.♔d5 ♘f8

The last finesse – Black's Knight is heading to h7 to take White's remaining pawn.

68.♘f4 ♘h7 69.♘xg6

My reward for holding GM Harika to a draw in Round 2 was being paired with another GM from India for the afternoon double-game day. Two GMs in one day — more excitement to come in Round 3.

1/2-1/2

Firat, Burak (2503) Kleinman, Michael (2289)

D97

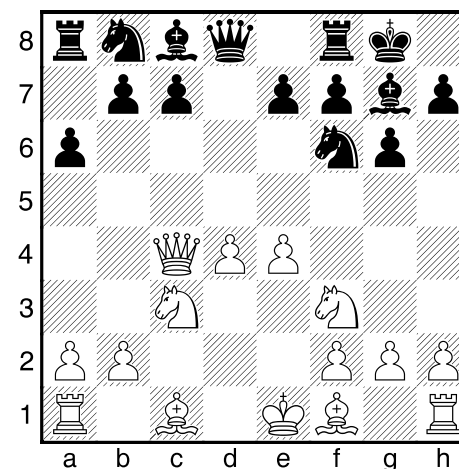
Reykjavik Open (5), 22.04.2017
Notes by John Upper

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♘g7 5.♔b3

The Russian System. White gets pawns on e4 and d4 in return for a few tempi off the exposed ♔. It doesn't get an advantage against the Grunfeld — what does?

— but it keeps more pieces on the board than the direct-to-endgame lines with ...♔a5+.

5...dxc4 6.♔xc4 0-0 7.e4 a6



8.♔a4!?

A rare move which was semi-popular about 6 years ago, and which has the advantage of putting many Black players (including Michael in this game) out of their prep.

8.a4 doesn't stop ...b5, since after 8...b5 9.axb5?

axb5 White's ♔ and ♔ are hanging.

8.e5 b5 9.♔b3 ♘fd7 is one of the main lines, when White has tried all sorts of things, including: 10.e6 and 10.♘g5 and 10.h4.

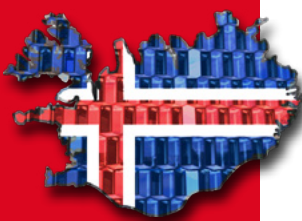
8.♔e2 b5 9.♔b3 c5 10.dxc5 ♘e6 11.♔c2 ♘bd7 12.♔e3 ♔c8 13.♔d1 b4 14.♘d5 ♘xd5 15.exd5 ♘xc5 16.0-0 is another mainline, when White has the ♘ pair but Black does just fine with Kaufman's recommended: 16...♔d6

8...♔g4

8...c5! 9.dxc5 ♘d7 10.♔a3 (10.♔b3 a5 with fine play for



Three-fer
Hambleton, Piasetski, Kleinman



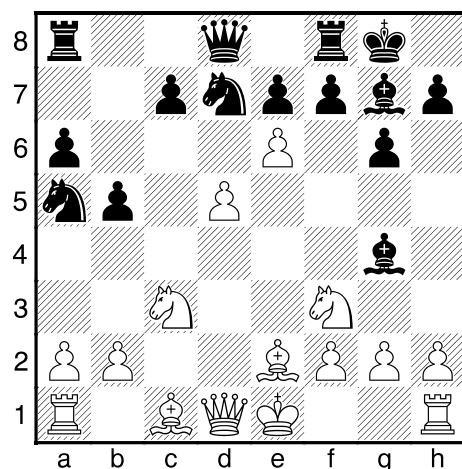
Chess Canada Gnome

Black – Kaufman) 10...♙c6
11.♘d2 ♞ ½-½ (43) [Wang,H \(2742\)](#)–[Grischuk,A \(2754\)](#)
London, 2012.

**9.♙e2 ♘c6 10.d5 b5 11.♖d1
♘a5 12.e5**

Computers recommend: 12.h3
♙xf3 13.♙xf3 c6 with a typical
Russian System middlegame:
White has the ♙s, Black has
active minors.

12...♘d7 13.e6



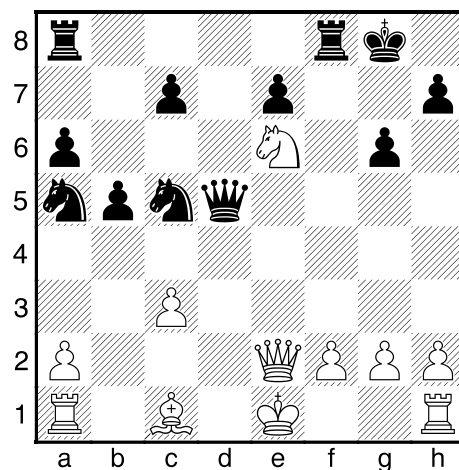
13...fxe6!N

13...♙xf3 14.exf7+ ♜xf7 15.♙xf3
♘e5 16.♙e2 c6 ♞ (½-½, 46)
[Bartel,M \(2653\)](#)–[Borisek,J \(2541\)](#)
Porto Carras, 2011.

**14.♘g5 ♙xe2 15.♖xe2
15.♘xe2? ♘c5 16.♘f4 exd5**

17.♘fe6 ♘xe6 18.♘xe6 ♖d6
19.♘xf8 ♜xf8 ♞ Black's center
pawns will rule.

**15...♘c5 16.♘xe6 ♙xc3+!
17.bxc3 ♖xd5**



18.♘xf8?

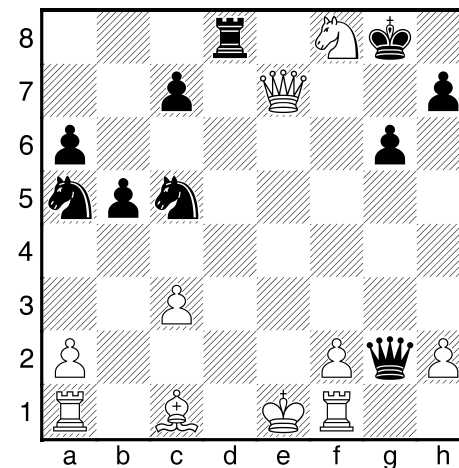
♞18.♘xc5 ♖xc5 19.0-0 ♘c4 ♞

Black's pawns
and ♖ are a bit
loose, but he is
up a ♙.

**18...♖xg2! ♞
19.♜f1 ♜d8!!**

Playing for
mate rather
than settling for
comp. 19...♜xf8
20.♙e3 ♖c6 ♞.

20.♖xe7



20...♘d3+ ♞-+

Just to show some of Black's
attacking possibilities, there's a
draw after: 20...♖d1+ 21.♖xd1
♖xf1+ 22.♖e1 ♞ ♘d3+ 23.♙d2
(23.♖d2 ♖f3+ 24.♖c2 ♖e4+
25.♖d1=) 23...♖f3+ (23...♘c4
24.♖e2 ♞ ♘d5 ♞) 24.♖e2 ♖h1+

25.♙e1 ♖d5+=.

21.♖e2

White is losing, so the choice is
the "best" way to lose. The game
move allows a nice mate with the
♘s.

21.♖d2 loses to: 21...♘c6 ♞
(21...♖xf1? 22.♖e6+ ♖xf8
23.♖f6+ (23.♙a3+? ♘c5+-)
23...♖e8 ♞=) 22.♖e6+ ♖xf8
23.♙a3+ (23.♖f6+ ♖g8 24.♖e6+
♖g7-+) 23...♘db4+ (23...b4!)
24.♖e2 ♖e8-+.

21...♖g4+ ♞ 22.♖d2 ♘b4+!

White bowed to the inevitable:
22...♘b4+ 23.♖xd8 (23.♖e1
♘c2#) 23...♘c4+ 24.♖e1 ♘c2#.



A nice win by
Michael, who raised
his score to 4/5
after 5 rounds; his
only dropped points
being a loss to GM
Sergei Movsesian
(2677).

0-1

Lively Postmortem

Kleinman with Fiona
Steil-Antoni

Notes by
FM John Doknjas
Karavade, Eesha (2405)
Doknjas, John (2216)

A65

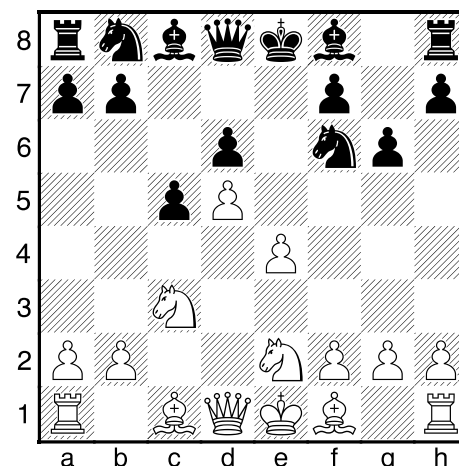
Reykjavik Open (7), 24.04.2017

My opponent in this game was a strong IM from India. Interestingly enough, she was my third opponent from India, and my previous two were GMs! My preparation for this game consisted of briefly reviewing my main lines, as she played multiple openings. Once again I was out of my prep early on, but the game turned out interesting nonetheless.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6
4.♘c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6

The Benoni – I've played this opening for roughly 10 years now. One great aspect of it that I like is the ability to gain active play on all sides of the board. Black is not limited to playing in only the Kingside, center, or Queenside. Often the best Benoni games involve attacking all over the place, simultaneously.

6.e4 g6 7.♘ge2



An interesting system against the Benoni. The idea of it is to bring the Knight to g3 and overprotect the e4 pawn. This allows White to focus on attacking in the center, and not having to worry about defending e4. The drawback is that the Knight is not ideally placed on g3, and it takes White an extra tempo to move it there.

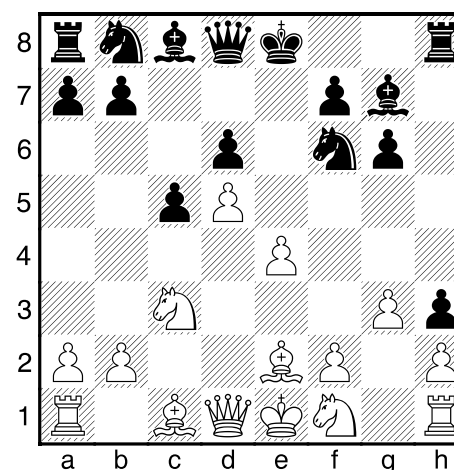
7...♗g7 8.♘g3 h5!?

Not the main move, but I felt in the mood to play this. Pushing the h-pawn up the board immediately makes the game more double edged. Apparently the craziness of a normal Benoni wasn't enough that day...

9.♙e2 h4

After this move there is no going back – the pawn is headed to h3. Castling would still be fine here.

10.♘f1 h3 11.g3



In return for the weak pawn on h3, Black has gained a dynamic advantage – a few tempi. If White manages to castle then I might be in trouble, although even then the h3 pawn acts as a thorn in the King's side.

11...a6

11...♘a6!? is another option, perhaps more in the spirit of the position. The goal is to quickly prepare the ...b5 push before White manages to fully consolidate her position.

12.a4 ♘bd7 13.♗g5 ♔c7
14.♘d2!

The correct piece setup by White. From d2, the Knight protects e4 and is ready to go to c4 if needed.

14...0-0

At this point I had spent too much time, and had not played that well either. My mistake was



Reverse Angle
 FSA & GM Simon Williams

not understanding that normal moves do not work well here. The h3 pawn is almost sacrificing itself in order to give me activity. I have to take advantage of it.

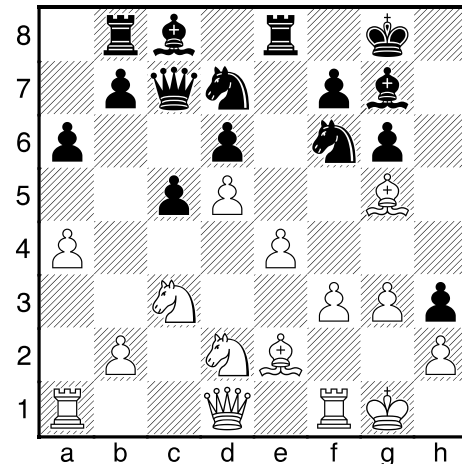
15.0-0 ♖e8

A useful move, pressuring e4 and preventing the ♘d2 from moving...

16.f3!

So much for immobilizing ♘d2! f3 also has another purpose: preparing to play g4 one day and then take the isolated h3 pawn.

16...♖b8



17.♕e3!?

Playing prophylactically – White plans to bring her Bishop to f2 and reinforce the Kingside.

However, perhaps it was better to immediately prepare the b4 push. Waiting too long in the Benoni often results in a brutal punishment. 17.♖c1! immediately posing the question to Black about how to deal with the threat of b4.

17...♘h7?

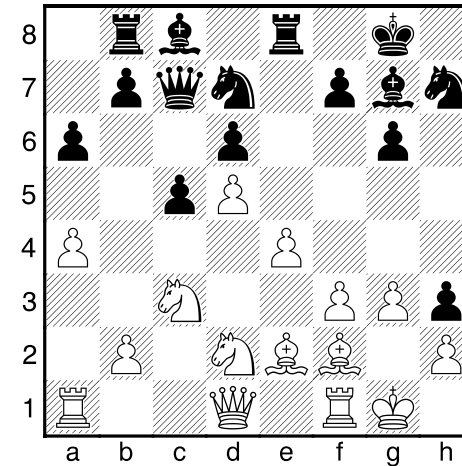
A weak move – I'm trying to push ...f5, even though I spent my last move preparing ...b5. I do not have the luxury of taking my time in this position – the only thing that matters is getting activity somewhere.

17...♘e5! is far stronger than the game move. My plan is simple: play ...♕d7, followed by ...b5. This must be done before White can push b4. It is important to note that 18.f4 is answered by 18...♘eg4!

editor – 17...♘e5 is certainly more aggressive, but (FWIW) Stockfish rates 17...♘h7 as Black's best move.

18.♕f2

Or else 18...f5 with a reasonable game for Black.



18...♘df8

With the idea of 19...♕d7. This is a sad move, but I don't have much choice if I want to develop the c8-Bishop.

18...♘e5? Now this is immediately refuted by 19.f4, due to the absence of a Knight on f6.

18...♘df6 blocks the Knight on h7 from returning into the game.

18...f5 is a desperate bid for activity, perhaps my best chance here. After 19.exf5 gxf5 White is better due to my weak Kingside pawns, but in return I am able to activate my pieces. This would probably be a better option than the game.

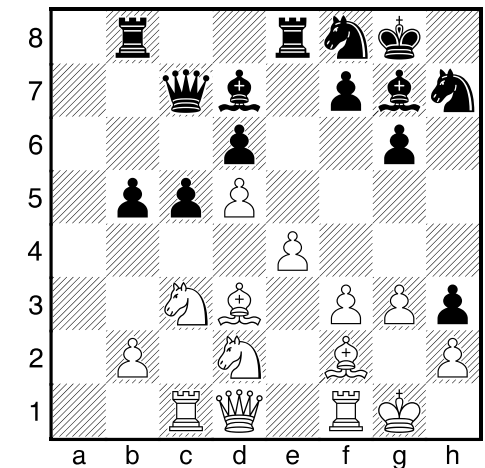
19.♕d3!

Once again, preventing my ...f5 break, a threat which had gained merit due to my c8-Bishop being opened up.

19...♕d7 20.♖c1 b5

Finally! Although due to White's delay, Black is not so bad off.

21.axb5 axb5

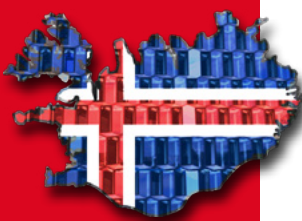


22.b4!

Correctly not fearing 22...c4. Even though Black gains a protected passed pawn, I am left with almost no activity on the Queenside. Also, White gets the important d4 square – a wonderful outpost for a Knight.

22...c4

22...cxb4? 23.♘xb5 ♕d8
24.♘xd6+.



23. ♖e2 g5!

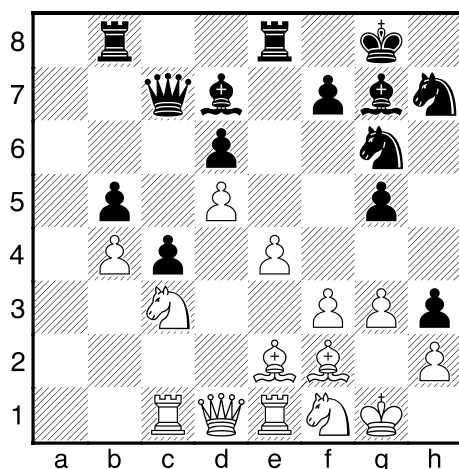
This move, contrary to how it looks, is mainly positional. I want to bring my f8-Knight to g6, giving me good control over the dark squares (h4, f4, e5, etc).

23...f5!? was another option, giving the game a different taste as opposed to 23...g5. My activity in this variation is quicker, but my Kingside becomes more exposed. 24.exf5 ♕xf5 25. ♘de4 followed by 26. ♖d4 – White enjoys a slightly better position.

24. ♖e1 ♘g6

My f8-Knight finally finds a purpose.

25. ♘f1



En route to f5, via e3. This

move makes sense, considering my 23...g5 move weakens my Kingside light squares. This is an instructive moment – any pawn move that gives you control over one colour complex will always weaken your control over the other colour complex.

25...f5

A must. If White's f1-Knight reaches f5, I may be forced to give up my light-squared Bishop for it. If this happens, my b5 pawn, e6 square, and c6 square will all be terribly weak.

26.exf5

Forced – or else I play f4.

26. ♖d4? f4 27. ♖xg7 ♔xg7
28. ♖d4+ ♘f6 With good play for Black on the dark squares.

26...♕xf5 27. ♘e3

The Knight blocks the f2 Bishop.

27. ♖d4 activates the Bishop, but allows me to exchange off a few pieces with 27...♕xd4+ 28. ♖xd4 ♕b6 29. ♖xb6 ♖xb6 and it's hard to believe White has anything here.

27...♕d7 28. ♖c2 ♘e7

Preventing White's Knight from reaching f5.

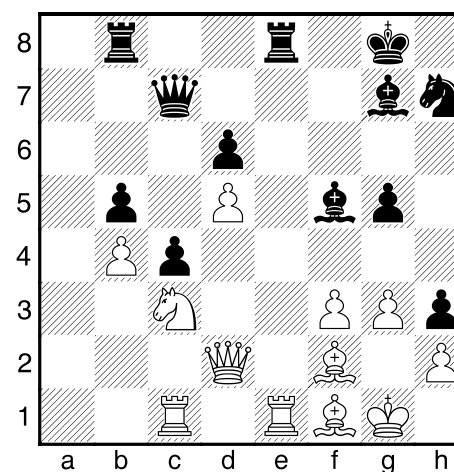
28...♘e5 29.f4 gxf4 30.gxf4
♘f7 31. ♖f3→ ♖e4 and ♘f5 are coming – Black will have to deal with an unpleasant attack.

29. ♖d2 ♘f5?!

A mistake – the Knight on e3 is merely restricting White's pieces. Offering to exchange it off is merely helping the opponent.

Starting immediate counterplay on the a-file was a stronger idea, 29...♖a8!

30. ♘xf5 ♕xf5 31. ♖f1!



A strong move with multiple purposes: White contests the

e-file, prepares to win the h3 pawn (after playing g4), and still maintains control over the important d3 square.

31...♖f7

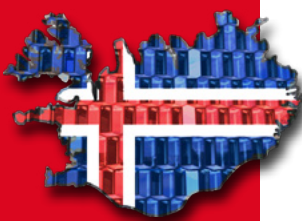
Attempting to take advantage of the now vulnerable f3 pawn. At this point I was quite low on time – this caused me to believe my position was worse than it was, and as a result my play seemed to flounder.

32. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 33.g4!

The h3 pawn has finally been lost – at least my pieces on the 7th and 8th ranks managed to get plenty of activity for it!

33...♖g6

33...♖d7! is another idea, freeing up the Queen and Rook from defending the b5 pawn: 34. ♖xh3 ♖a8 35. ♖d4 ♖g6 36. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 37. ♖d4+ ♘f6 Compared to the 37th move in the game, Black seems much more active. The Queen is better stationed on g6 than the Bishop. On that square, it both defends the Black King, and threatens to invade White's position.



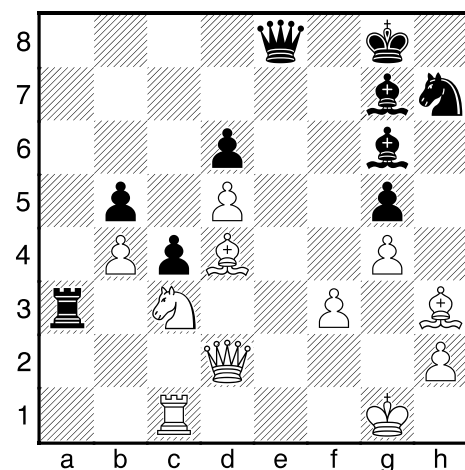
Chess Canada

Gnome

34. ♖xh3 ♜a8

Or else 35. ♖a1 is almost decisive.

35. ♖d4 ♜a3



Wanting to play ... ♜b3 and take the isolated b4 pawn. At this point the game seemed hopeless to me. This was due to me having low time, being down one pawn, and the psychological effect the game was having – I was taking too long on my moves, and none of them were giving me nice results.

36. ♖xg7 ♜xg7 37. ♖e1

37. ♖d4+?! ♜f6 Now White cannot move the Rook to e1.

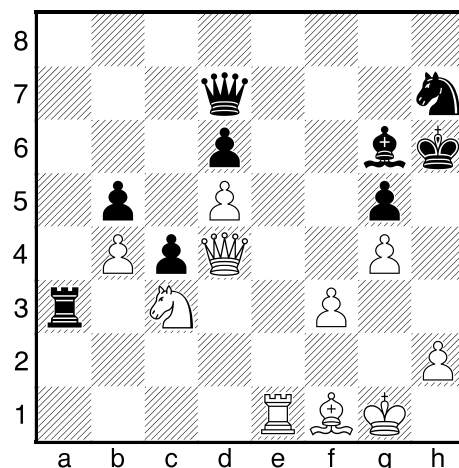
37... ♖d7 38. ♖d4+ ♜h6!

This move looks risky, but in a

way it makes my King safer. If I had left it on g7 or moved it backwards, it would be easier for White's Rook and Queen to reach it.

38... ♜f6? 39. ♖e6 ♖d8 40. f4+- is dead lost for Black.

39. ♖f1!



Improving the Bishop – it is no longer out of play, and now it is once again controlling the important d3 square.

39... ♜b3!?

The b4 pawn seems irrelevant in this position, but what else is there to do? This move puts some psychological pressure on White, because now she feels like she must prove her activity

or else I have two connected passed pawns.

Objectively, 39... ♜a8 was the better move. The Rook runs back home to defend the King. In this scenario, I would likely lose my b5-pawn and then eventually the game.

40. ♖e6!

Setting a subtle trap.

40... ♖g7!

Responding to the trap well. This move threatens a Queen exchange, which would relieve the pressure on Black's King.

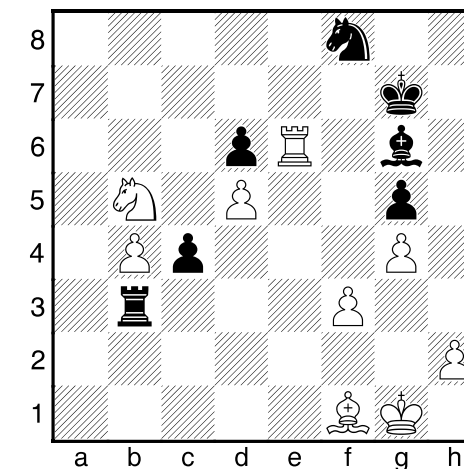
40... ♜xb4?? 41. ♖d3!+- Both pieces attacking the ♖d3 are pinned! 41... ♜f8 (41... cxd3 42. ♖xb4) 42. ♖h8+ ♜h7?? Why not blunder again after 2 moves? (42... ♖h7 43. ♖xf8+ #2.) 43. ♖xg6# with a situation that might be problematic.

41. ♜xb5 ♜f8

41... ♖xd4+ 42. ♜xd4 ♜xb4??

Winning a pawn.... 43. ♜f5# and blundering the game.

42. ♖xg7+ ♜xg7



43. ♖e7+

43. ♖xd6?! is still winning for White, but it provides me with some good play: 43... c3 During the game this looked good to me, but the engine says White is still comfortably winning after 44. ♖c6.

43... ♜f6 44. ♖c7

Monitoring the c-pawn, while preparing to take d6 with the ♜b5.

44... ♖d3

Forced or else I lose the c4-pawn (my only asset in this position).

44... ♜xb4? 45. ♖xc4 ♜b1+

Black's pseudo-activity soon peters out: 46. ♜f2 ♜b2+ 47. ♜e3



Chess Canada

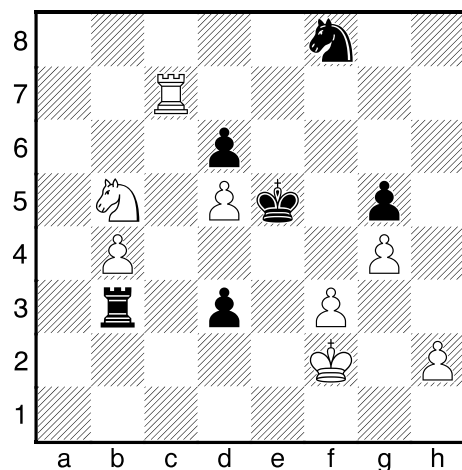
Gnome

♖xh2 48.♘xd6+-.

45.♙xd3 cxd3 46.♔f2

Allowing my King to e5, but White doesn't have a choice here. She must bring her King closer to the dangerous passer on d3.

46...♔e5



At this point, I saw that White could immediately win with 47.♖f7, attacking the f8-Knight and threatening mate on f5.

47.♔e3??

Missing a clear win! I was very surprised when she played this move. Now I have real chances to draw the game.

47.♖f7! ♔xd5 (47...♘g6 48.♖f5#)

48.♖xf8+-.

47...♖xb4??

Once again, allowing 48.♖f7. It actually may have been here that I saw the ♖f7 move.

47...♔xd5 48.♖c3 ♖xc3
49.♘xc3+ ♔c4 50.♘e4 ♘e6
51.b5 ♔xb5 52.♘xd6+ ♔c5
53.♘f7 ♔d5 54.♔xd3+- Once White manages to push the h-pawn or f-pawn, it will be over. Two pawns and a Knight vs a Knight is an easy win.

48.♘c3??

A comedy of errors. 48.♖f7 ♖f4
49.♖xf4 gxf4+ 50.♔xd3 ♔xd5
51.h4+-.

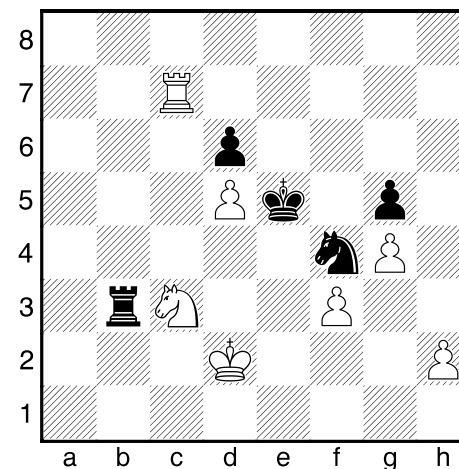
48...♘g6 49.♔xd3

This time ♖f7 has no bite: 49.♖f7 ♖f4 50.♖xf4 ♘xf4 and Black should draw.

49...♘f4+ 50.♔e3 ♖b3

Lifting the pressure too quickly is a mistake: 50...♘xd5+? 51.♘xd5 ♔xd5 52.♖g7 ♖b3+ 53.♔f2 ♖b2+ 54.♔g3+- When the g5-pawn falls, White is winning.

51.♔d2



51...♖b2+!?

I saw 51...♘xd5 in the game and knew it was probably a draw, but I preferred to play this. I figured I should be still able to draw, but this move also provided me with some winning chances. It is quite unpleasant to tread through the minefield as White in the position.

51...♘xd5
52.♘xd5 ♔xd5
53.♖g7 ♔d4
54.♖xg5 ♖b2+
55.♔d1 ♖xh2
and Black should have no problems drawing.

My superior activity fully compensates for the missing pawn. In Rook endgames, activity is one of the most important factors to be considered.

52.♔d1 ♔d4

Once again preferring activity to a guaranteed draw. 52...♖xh2 obviously draws easily, and perhaps I should have played it.

53.♔c1?

53.♘e4! is a stronger move, forcing Black to stop attacking and just start taking pawns when the game peters out to a draw in many ways. For example:



Pub Quiz

FMs Dougherty & Plotkin

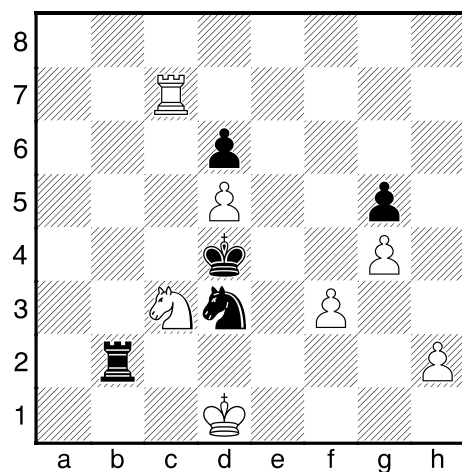
53...♖xh2 54.♘xd6 ♘xd5

55.♖a7= White's Rook checks from the side save her from any tricks I have. The game is an easy draw.

53...♞d3+!

Bringing the Knight into the attack, with tempo.

54.♔d1



54...♖xh2

54...♞e5 55.♞e4 ♞xf3 56.♞xd6 ♔xd5 57.♞f5 ♞xh2 should be a draw, although practically Black has winning chances. The psychological aspect is also important to consider — White had gone from winning, to equal, and now to worse. Almost no one can play optimally under these conditions. I could tell

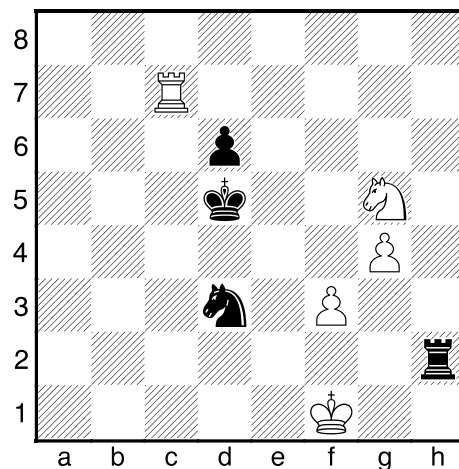
that around this point in the game, my opponent was visibly unhappy.

55.♞e4 ♖h1+?!

The result of seeing a mirage in time pressure! I thought that 56.♔e2 ♖e1+ was checkmate, missing that White could move her King to d2. It's important to note that at this point in the game we were both quite now low on time (this was the second time control, reached after 40 moves).

55...♔e3 is a natural and stronger move, with the threat of: ...♖h1+-♖c1+-♖xc7! 56.♖e7 ♔xf3 57.♞xd6 ♔xg4=.

56.♔e2 ♖h2+ 57.♔f1 ♔xd5 58.♞xg5



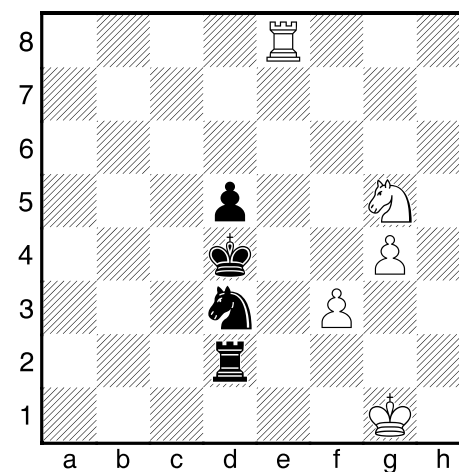
During the game I felt that White had some advantage here.

While this is not entirely false, my evaluation was mainly due to psychological factors. I had just lost control of the game, having let White's King escape its "prison". Like my opponent, I proceeded to play badly after losing my advantage.

58...♔d4 59.♖e7

Cutting the King off, and threatening 60. ♖e4+.

59...d5 60.♔g1 ♖d2 61.♖e8



61...♞e5?!

Not necessarily a bad move, but in time trouble this Knight caused me quite some grief. It ends up mainly being a liability, forcing my King on d4 to defend

it until it moves.

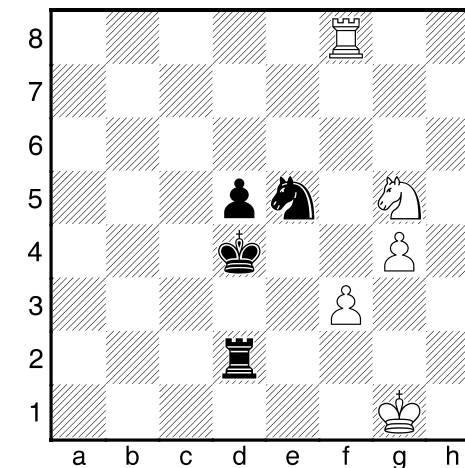
61...♞f4! was a better move, preparing 62...♔d3 and 63...d4. If White moves her Rook to attack my Knight, my King goes to e3: 62.♖f8 ♔e3.

62.♔f1 ♖a2 63.♖f8 ♞c4 64.♖e8 ♞e5

It is interesting how both sides seem to be in a mutual zugzwang.

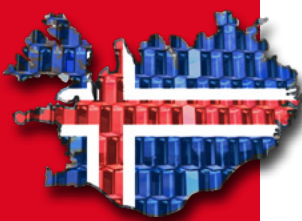
65.♔g1 ♖d2 66.♖f8?

Allowing my King access to the e3 square.



66...♖e2?

Missing my chance. I was likely lulled into the waiting game we were both playing, that I didn't seriously consider 66...♔e3!



67.♖e8 ♔f4 when the King invades the dark squares like a snake. There is no way for White to win the ♗e5. 68.♔f1 ♖d3 Followed by 69...♔g3. In a time scramble, Black has some very good winning chances.

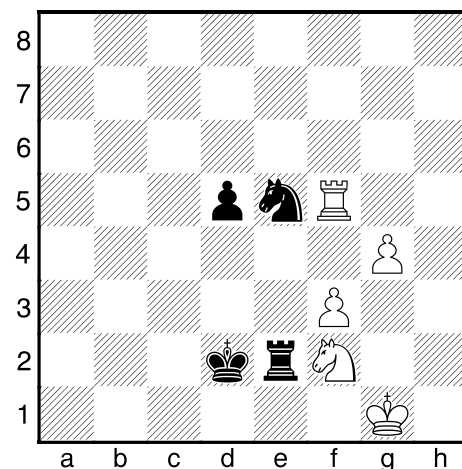
67.♖f5 ♔d3?

The King is just in the way of the pawn here. 67...♔c3 followed by running the d-pawn down the board.

68.♗h3

68.♗f7!? ♗xf7 69.♖xf7 d4 should be a draw, but who knows what could happen in the time scramble we were in.

68...♔d2 69.♗f2



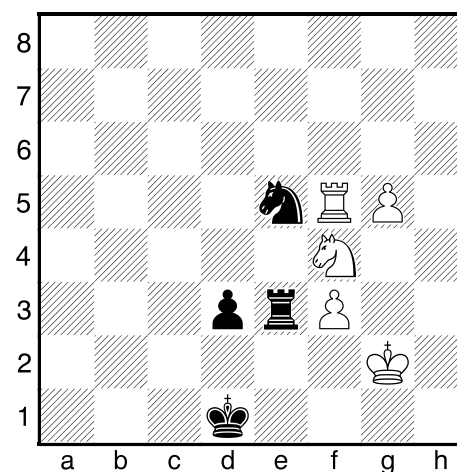
69...♖e3

69...♗g6! was an interesting idea I missed during the game. The d5-pawn is sacrificed in order to allow Black's King to invade on the Kingside. 70.♖xd5+ ♔e3 71.♖d3+ (71.♖f5? ♖e1+ 72.♔g2 ♗h4+) 71...♔f4 with good drawing chances.

70.♔g2 ♔e2!

Correctly bringing the King closer.

71.♗h3 d4 72.g5 d3 73.♗f4+ ♔d1



74.♗xd3!

An excellent practical choice. I think we were both playing on the 30 second increment at this point, and with so little time it is not clear how to stop White's pawns. I remember a large

crowd gathering to watch the game around here.

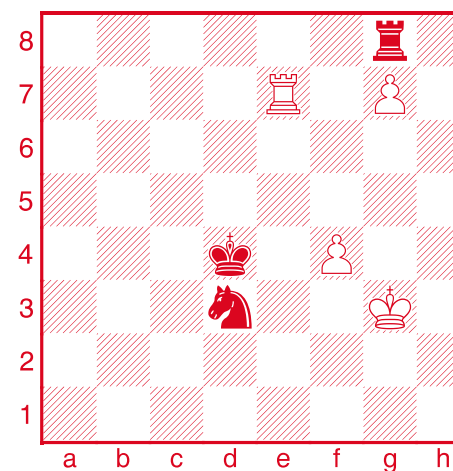
74...♗xd3 75.♔g3 ♔e2

75...♖e1! was a better try – my King is too slow, so for now it should be ignored. 76.♔g4 ♖g1+ Always put Rooks behind passed pawns! 77.♔h5 ♔e2 78.g6 ♔e3 79.♔h6 ♗f4 80.g7 ♖h1+ 81.♔g5 ♗e6+ 82.♔f6 ♗xg7= the f-pawn will fall shortly, followed by a draw.

76.g6 ♖e8 77.g7 ♖g8 78.♖f7 ♔e3 79.♖e7+!

Cutting off my King – now White is close to objectively winning.

79...♔d4 80.f4



There is a move that saves Black, but one probably only

an engine could find in a few seconds.

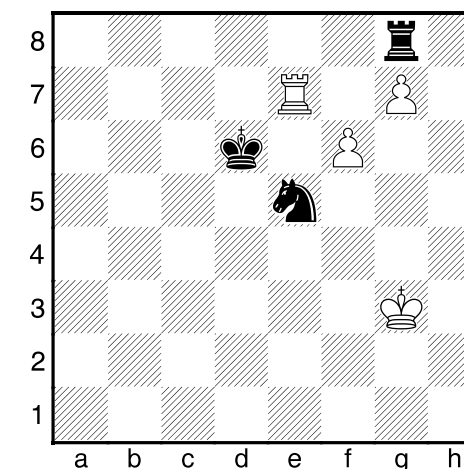
80...♔d5?

80...♗b4□ 81.♔g4 ♗d5 the Rook is forced to either give up the g7-pawn, or the e-file. 82.♖f7 ♔e4 with my King so close, it is an easy draw.

81.f5

Now White is winning.

81...♔d6 82.f6 ♗e5

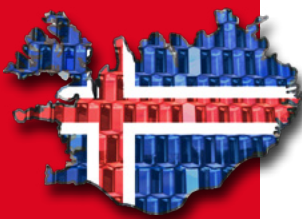


83.♔h3□

Putting me in *zugzwang*. If White had advanced her King to h4 or f4, I would have the ...♗g6+ fork:

83.f7?? ♖xg7+-+;

83.♔h4? ♗g6+ 84.♔h5 ♗xe7 85.f7 ♖xg7 86.f8♖=.



Chess Canada Gnome

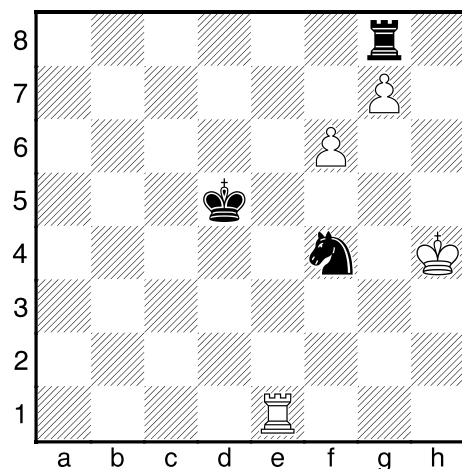
83...♖g6 84.♞e4! ♔d5

84...♔d7? 85.♔g4+- and Black is helpless against the White King advance.

85.♞e1??

Blowing the win! To be fair, neither my opponent nor I saw the winning move during the game: 85.♞e8!! — this could have been the move of the game, had it been played, 85...♞xe8 86.f7 ♞e3+ (86...♞b8 87.g8♞+-) 87.♔h2 ♞e2+ 88.♔g1+-.

85...♘f4+♟= 86.♔h4



86...♘g2+??

86...♘e6♟ draws. The threat is 87...♘xg7. 87.♞g1 (87.♞xe6? is a tempo slow 87...♔xe6 88.♔g5 ♔f7+-) 87...♔e5 88.f7 ♞xg7

89.♞xg7 ♔f6 90.♞h7 ♔g6 91.♞h5 ♔xf7=.

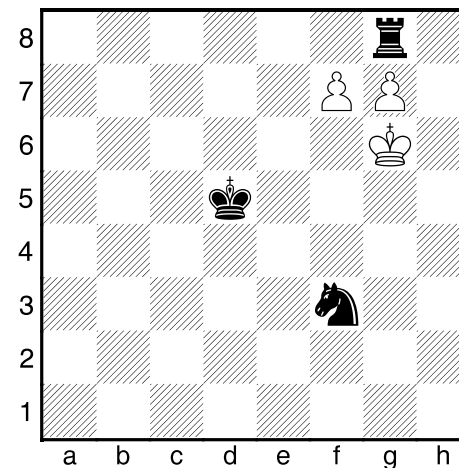
87.♔g5??

Returning the favour. 87.♔h5♟+- ♘xe1 88.f7 The point of 87.♔h5: I cannot take on g7 with check. 88...♞xg7 89.f8♞+- and no matter what I do, either my Rook or Knight will be forked and taken by the Queen.

87...♘xe1 88.♔g6 ♘f3

The Knight returns just in time.

89.f7



89...♘e5+

A funny position – Black is the one trying to exchange a Rook and a Knight for two pawns!



editor – or 89...♞xg7+ 90.♔xg7 ♘g5=.

**90.♔h7 ♞xg7+ 91.♔xg7
♘xf7 92.♔xf7**

1/2-1/2

**Notes by
Joshua Doknjas
Doknjas, Joshua (2123)
L'Ami, Alina (2324)**

B90

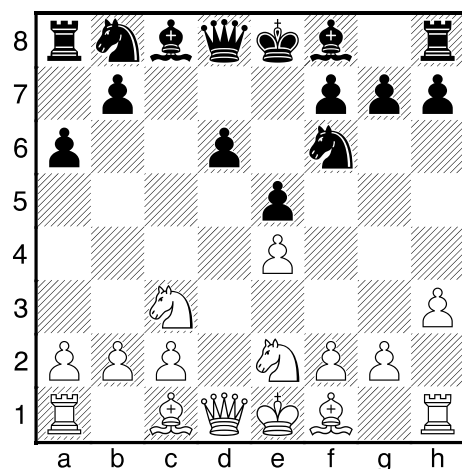
Reykjavik Open (9), 26.04.2017

Playing in the 2017 Reykjavik Open was a great experience. The tournament was very well organized and it was exciting to play alongside some of the top players in the world. One of the main drawbacks is that everything in Iceland is very expensive, e.g., a regular hamburger was about \$20 bucks.

The game I am annotating was played in the 9th round. At this point in the tournament, I had 5/8, and I knew I had to win if I wanted to fight for some of the category prizes.

Team Doknjas

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.h3
e5 7.♗de2

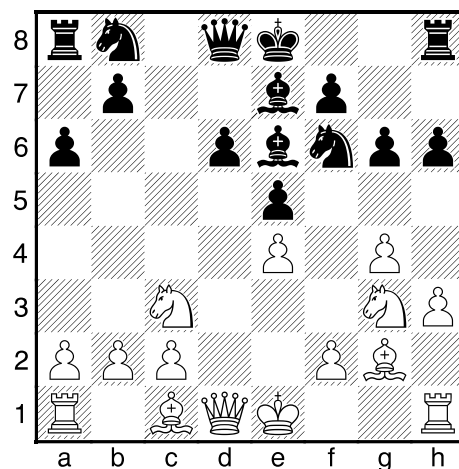


Already at this point my opponent was spending a lot of time. In my preparation, I saw that my opponent had barely any games where White played 6. h3. I decided to spend most of my time looking at the main line with 7... h5 and the sharper lines with 6... e6.

7...♗e6?!

Especially if this move is not followed up with ...d5, White should be getting a much better position out of the opening.

8.g4 ♗e7 9.♗g2 h6 10.♗g3 g6!?



This move really surprised me. 10... g6 seemed to just weaken the h6-pawn and prevent Black from castling. Now, instead of playing a normal move like 11.♗e3 or 11.0-0, I looked for a way to really punish my opponent's last move.

11.f4?!

♠11.♗e3± ♘bd7 (11...♗f8 12.♖d2 ♗g7 13.♗d5±) 12.♖d2 ♗b6 13.b3±.

11...♖b6!

I completely missed this move. I was expecting either 11... exf4 or 11...♗c6. In both cases, White would have a much better position. After 11...♖b6, White's position gets a lot harder to play.

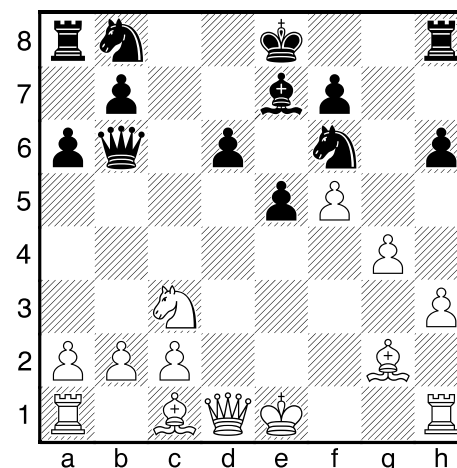
11...exf4 12.♗xf4±;
11...♗c6 12.f5±.

12.f5 gxf5 13.♗xf5?!

I remember playing this move fairly quickly. I thought that getting the Bishop pair would just give White an advantage. However, as it turns out, Black has some dangerous counterplay with ...d5.

13.exf5 ♗c4∞.

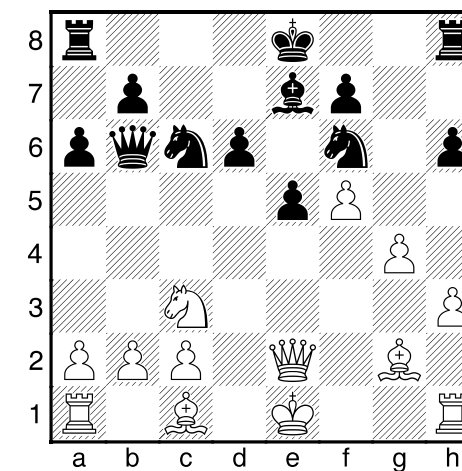
13...♗xf5 14.exf5



14...♗c6

Playing ...d5 right here is an option for Black as well: 14... d5!? 15.♖e2 (15.♗xd5? ♗xd5 16.♖xd5 ♗h4+ 17.♗e2 (17.♗d1 ♗c6-+) 17...♖f2+ 18.♗d1 ♗c6+) 15...d4∞ or 15...e4!±.

15.♖e2



Stopping Black's counterplay with ...d5 makes more sense. However, during the game, I wasn't really afraid of it. 15.♗d5 ♗xd5 16.♖xd5=.

15...d5

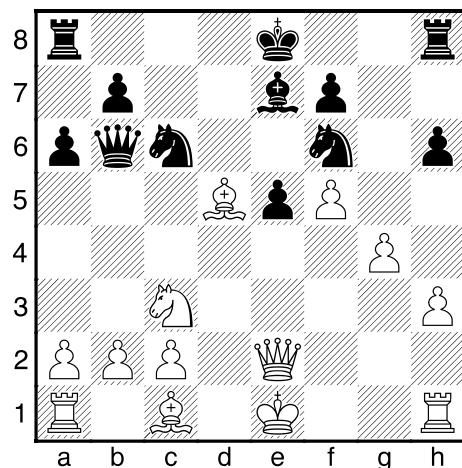
Playing 15...♗d4!± before ...d5 forces White's queen into a bad position. Also, Black's Knight on d4 will be a huge problem for White in some lines. 16.♖f2 (16.♖d3 d5±) 16...d5:

a) 17.♗xd5? ♗xd5 18.♗xd5 ♖a5+-+;

b) 17.♗xd5? ♗xd5 18.♗xd5 ♖a5+ (18...♖c6 also wins.) 19.♗c3 ♗h4! 20.♖xh4 ♗f3+-+;

c) 17.0-0 ♖e2+ 18.♔h1 ♚xf2
and Black is much better in this
endgame.

16.♙xd5

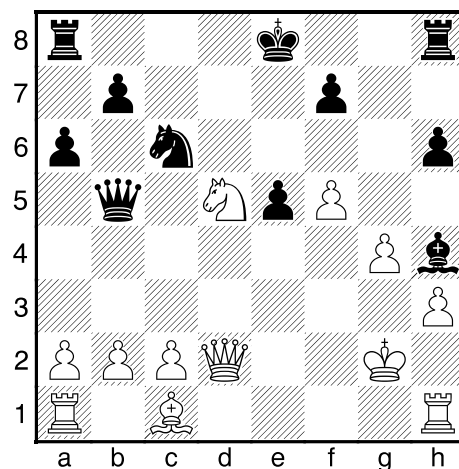


I don't remember even looking
at any move besides this. It
seemed to me that this was just
more natural and stronger than
16. ♖xd5.

16...♘xd5

16...♘d4! Again, throwing in
this move first would have been
much better for Black. 17.♚g2
♘xd5 18.♘xd5 ♚c5 19.♘e3
(19.♘c3? ♙h4+ 20.♔f1 0-0-0)
19...♙h4+ 20.♔f1 0-0-0.

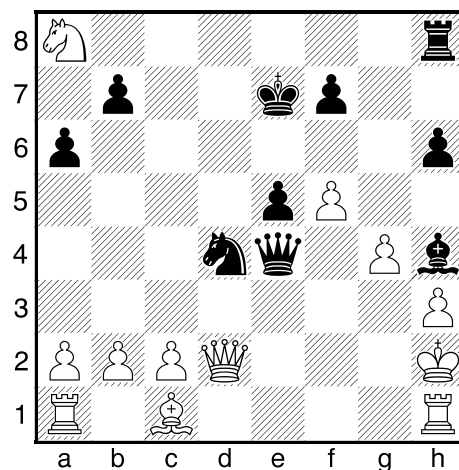
17.♘xd5 ♚a5+ 18.♚d2
♙h4+ 19.♔f1 ♚b5+ 20.♔g2



20...♙c4?

This wasn't the best way for
Black to show compensation
for the pawn; she should have
tried 20...0-0-0 21.c4! ♚c5= (21...♚xc4? 22.♘b6+-).

21.♘c7+ ♔e7 22.♘xa8
♚e4+ 23.♔h2 ♘d4



24.f6+!

Without this move, Black has
dangerous compensation for the
Rook. White's idea is to divert
Black's Bishop from the attack
or put Black's King into a bad
position.

24.♖f1? gives up the advantage:

not to 24...♘e2?? 25.f6+

♙xf6 (25...♔e8 26.♘c7+ ♔f8

27.♚d8#) 26.♖e1+-;

but 24...♖c8! (activating the
Rook first before ...♘e2) 25.c3

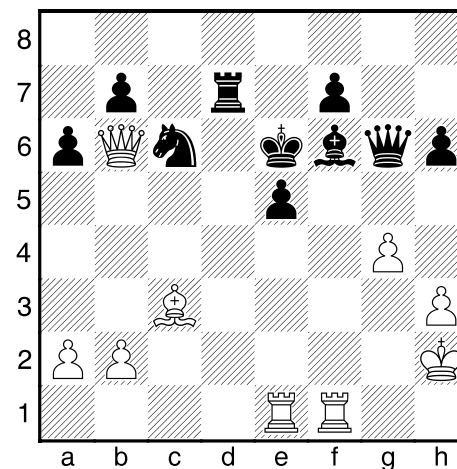
♘e2= 26.♖g1 (26.f6+ ♔e8=)

26...♙f2=.

24...♙xf6

24...♔f8 25.♖f1 and Black is
unable to continue the attack.

25.♖f1 ♖xa8 26.♚f2 ♚xc2
27.♙d2 ♚g6 28.♙b4+ ♔e6
29.♖ae1 ♖d8 30.♙c3 ♘c6
31.♚b6 ♖d7



Around here I was in serious
time pressure and finding
a way to win without giving
Black counterplay proved to be
challenging.

32.♖f5

32.♖xf6+!?!+- ♚xf6 33.♖xe5+.

32...h5 33.♙xe5

33.♖fxe5+! ♙xe5+ 34.♖xe5+ ♔d6

35.♖e2! and White threatens

♙b4+ ♚c5# During the game, I
didn't even consider 33.♖fxe5.

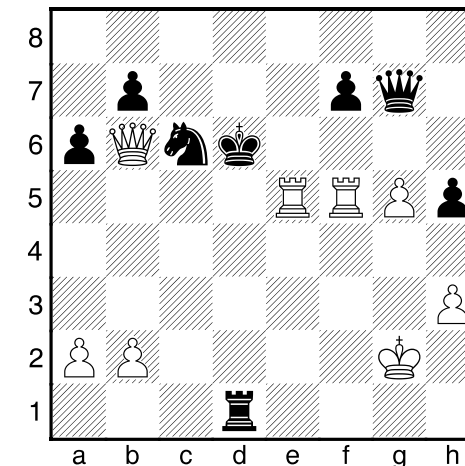
33...♖d2+ 34.♔h1 ♙xe5

35.♖exe5+

35.♖fxe5+ ♔d6 36.♖e7+-.

35...♔d6 36.g5 ♖d1+

37.♔g2 ♚g7



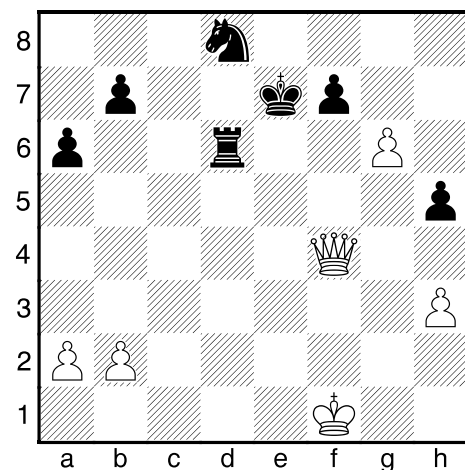
38.♖f6+!?



Chess Canada Gnome

38.♔c5+ ♕c7 39.♖e7+ ♔b8 This is completely winning for White after either Rook takes on f7, but with extremely low time on the clock, I thought that it would be too dangerous to allow Black's Queen to come down to the 2nd rank.

38...♔xe5 39.♖e3+ ♔d5
40.♖f3+ ♔c4 41.♖c3+ ♔d5
42.♖d6+ ♔xd6 43.♖xg7
♖d2+ 44.♔f1 ♖d8 45.♖h6+
♔e7 46.g6 ♖d6 47.♖e3+
♔f6 48.♖f4+ ♔e7

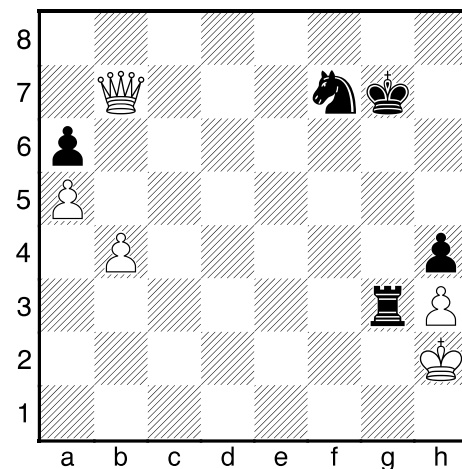


49.♖e5+?

The endgame is still easily winning for White as Black's pawns start to fall, but right after I let go of my Queen, I realized I missed a much more straightforward and nicer way to

win: 49.♖xd6+! ♔xd6 50.g7+.

49...♖e6 50.♖c7+ ♔e8
51.gxf7+ ♖xf7 52.♖xb7
♖f6+ 53.♔g2 ♖g6+ 54.♔h2
♔f8 55.a4 ♔g7 56.b4 h4
57.a5 ♖g3



58.♖e7 ♖g5 59.♖a7 ♔g6
60.♖xa6+ ♔f5 61.♖d3+ ♔f6
62.♖f3+ ♔e6 63.♖e4+ ♖e5
64.a6

After this game I had 6/9, and going into the 10th and final round, I was leading the U2200 section and Top Junior category. I was paired with GM Ramirez in the final round and lost.

1-0

At the end of the 2017 Reykjavik Open I won two prizes: U2200

– 2nd Place, and Top Junior
– 2nd Place, (ahead of [IM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu](#) who placed 3rd, and [IM Awonder Liang](#) who fell out of the top 3).
– **Joshua Doknjas**

Three Winners

Aman Hambleton: GM Norm

Michael Kleinman: IM Norm

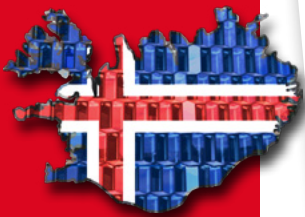
Joshua Doknjas: 2nd U2200, 2nd Jr.



photos: most photos of the Canadian players were taken by [Victoria Jung-Doknjas](#), including the one above and the full contingent photo on the next page. Others are from the Reykjavik Open facebook page (pix by Alina L'Ami), or screencaps from the live video feed.

links: parts of this report previously appeared on the CFC Newsfeed: <https://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/958>

Chess Canada Gnome



Seed		Canadians	FIDE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts.	Rk.	TPR	rtg+/-
39	IM	Hambleton Aman	2434	1	½	1	1	1	0	1	½	½	½	7	20	2619	25.9
69	FM	Kleinman Michael	2289	1	0	1	1	1	½	0	1	1	0	6.5	30	2489	51.6
83	FM	Plotkin Victor	2243	1	0	1	0	1	½	1	½	1	½	6.5	44	2329	25.6
119	CM	Doknjas Joshua	2123	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	6	53	2203	48
111		Plotkin Mark	2147	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	6	55	2169	10.6
134		Yu Jonathan	2073	0	1	1	0	1	1	½	0	1	½	6	64	2238	42.2
100	FM	Dougherty Michael	2171	1	½	1	0	0	½	1	1	½	0	5.5	98	2300	32.6
130	FM	Haessel Dale R.	2095	1	0	1	0	1	½	½	1	½	0	5.5	100	2174	22
67	IM	Piasetski Leon	2300	1	½	1	½	0	1	0	1	½	0	5.5	104	2287	-0.7
92	FM	Doknjas John	2216	1	½	½	0	1	½	½	1	0	½	5.5	111	2205	5.2
199		Doknjas Neil	1784	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	½	0	4.5	150	2061	124.4
173		Zybura Andre	1894	0	1	0	0	½	1	1	0	1	0	4.5	158	1792	-24.4
86		Murray Peter	2235	1	½	0	0	1	1	½	0	0	0	4	200	2108	-19.6
179		Boron Anthony	1865	0	½	½	0	½	½	1	0	0	½	3.5	229	1607	-58.4
237		Fournier Martin	1524	0	0	0	1	½	½	0	0	1	0	3	242	1576	0



Around the Hall

IM Leon Piasetski; FM Michael Dougherty vs GM Alexander Beliavsky; FM Dale Haessel; the Canadian contingent at Reykjavik.





On the Road...

WWCH KO

The Women's World Chess Championship was held in Tehran, Iran, February 10- March 4, 2017. It was a 64-player tournament of best-of-two knock-out matches, with the winner getting the FIDE title of Women's World Chess Champion. **Tan Zhongyi** (CHN) defeated **Anna Muzychuk** (UKR) in the rapid tie-break in the final.

Some of the best players in the world did not attend. **Hou Yifan** declined to play as a protest

against FIDE's constant changing of the dates and formats of the event — it had originally been scheduled for October 2016, but was postponed due to a lack of sponsors. Former Women's World Champion Mariya Muzychuk, and reigning US Women's Champion Nazi Paikidze both chose not to attend to protest the requirement that all women wear a hijab (headscarf) during the event.

2016 Canadian Champion **Qiyu Zhou** was seeded 54th, and paired against 11th seed **Natalia Pogonina** (RUS).



by John Upper

58

Pogonina, Natalija
(2487)

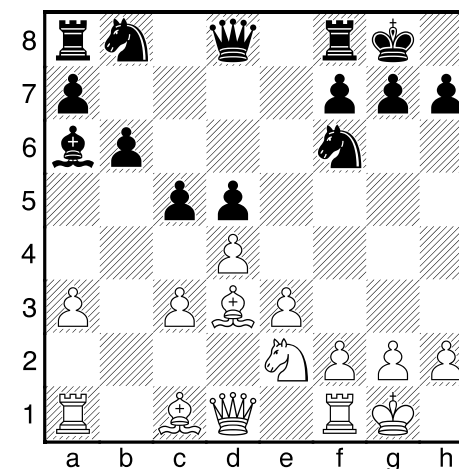
Zhou, Qiyu (2287)

E49

*WWCCh 2017 Tehran (1.1),
11.02.2017*

Notes by John Upper

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3
♙b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♙d3 d5
6.cxd5 exd5 7.♗ge2 c5
8.a3 ♙xc3+ 9.bxc3 b6 10.0-0
♙a6



There are a few hundred games in the MegaBase from here. White scores well, which may be because White's basic plan

Qiyu Zhou, Women's World Championship

Opponent Natalija Pogonina behind her, both wearing mandatory hijab.

... games by:

Qiyu Zhou:

- Women's World Championship, Tehran
- Blackpool Open, England
- Continental Championship, Mexico

Anthony Atanasov: WCCC, Batumi

Lefong Hua: IM Norm, St.Louis

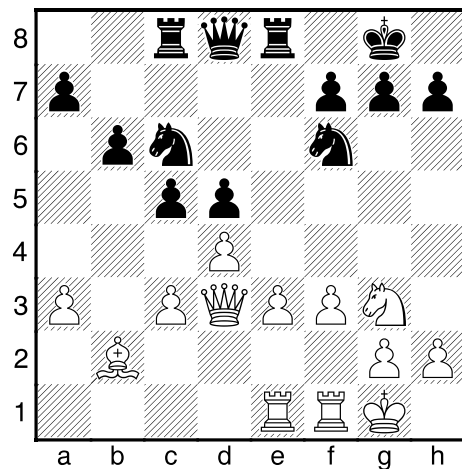
Michael Kleinman: Charleston, S.C.

— push in the center with ♖e1, ♖f1 and play f3 and e4 — makes it easier to play the White than Black, who has to prepare to react to all of White's maneuvers.

11.f3 ♖e8 12.♗g3 ♙xd3
13.♙xd3 ♗c6 14.♙b2 ♖c8
14...h5!? 15.♖ae1:
15...♗e7 16.e4 h4 17.♗h1 ♙d7
18.e5 ♗h5 19.f4 g6 20.♙f3
cxd4 21.cxd4 ♖ac8 22.g4 hxg3
23.hxg3 f5 (23...♖c2 24.g4 ♖xb2
25.gxh5 ♖c8⇒) 24.♖e2∞ (0-1,
40) **Gerzhoy,L** (2481)–**Hansen,E**
(2596) **Montreal 2014.**
15...cxd4 16.cxd4 g6 17.♗h1
♙d7 18.e4 h4 19.♗f2 ♗h5
20.♙d2 ♗a5 21.♗g4 ♗c4
22.♙c1 ♖ac8= (0-1, 40)
Jakovenko,D (2732)–**Maze,S**
(2591) **Gibraltar, 2016.**



15.♖ae1



A very common pawn structure from the e3 Nimzo (see the survey in [Chess Canada 2015.09](#)).

Black should use her ♖s to pressure White's center, and prepare the ♘s to blockade on any central square that becomes available.

When White plays e3-e4 is it very dangerous for Black to capture the center pawns (with ...cxd4 and ...dxe4) when White's central duo is both well-supported and mobile, since this makes it very hard, if not impossible, to prepare good squares for the ♘s in response to both d4-d5 and e4-e5.

Two 1952 games from in this line demonstrate Black's

difficulties, and show White getting a crushing attack, seemingly "out of nowhere".

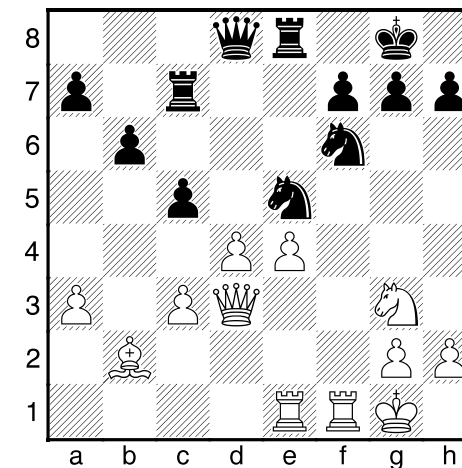
15...h6 16.e4 cxd4 17.cxd4 dxe4 18.fxe4 ♘e5 19.♖d1 ♘c4 20.♙c1 ♘h7 21.e5 ♖e6 22.♖e4 ♘f8 23.♘f5 ♙h8 24.♖h5+- and Black is busted. 24...♖c7 25.♖h4 ♘h7 26.♘xg7! ♙xg7 27.♙xh6+ ♙g8 28.♖g4+ ♖g6 29.e6! 1-0 [Kotov–Unzicker](#), Saltsjobaden 1952.

15...cxd4 16.cxd4 ♖d7 17.e4 dxe4 18.fxe4 ♘e5 (is similar to Pogonina–Zhou) 19.♖d1 (♞19.♖e2 defending the ♙b2, so that if 19...♘c4 20.♖xf6!+- ♘xb2 (20...gxf6 21.♘h5+-) 21.♘f5!) 19...♘c4 20.♙c1 ♖c6 21.e5 ♘d5 22.♖f3 f6? 23.♘h5!+- ♖f8 24.♖g3 ♖c7 25.♙h6! ♖f7 26.♖f3 ♖d8 27.♘xg7 ♖xg7 28.exf6 ♖gd7 29.f7+! (if 29...♖xf7 30.♖xd5!+-) 1-0 [Averbakh–Golombek](#), Saltsjobaden, 1952.

Black should NOT close the c-file with ...c4 (as in [Botvinnik–Capablanca](#), AVRO 1938) — but should probably allow White to push e5, and aim for counterplay on the c-file — as in this recent top-level example:

15...♖c7 16.e4 ♘e7 17.e5 ♘d7 18.a4 (18.f4 cxd4 19.cxd4 ♖c2↗) 18...cxd4 19.cxd4 ♖c2 20.♖xc2 ♖xc2= 21.♙a3 g6 22.♖c1 ♖a2 23.♙xe7 ♖xe7 24.♖a1 ♖xa1 25.♖xa1 f6 26.f4 ♘f8! Nice! exf6 would leave White's pawn on f6 doomed. 27.♖c1 ♘e6= (½-½, 64) [Eljanov,P \(2739\)–Wang,Y \(2737\)](#) Baku Ol, 2016.

15...♖c7 16.e4 dxe4 17.fxe4 ♘e5



The same maneuver as in the 1952 games above.

18.♖d1





Chess Canada Gnome

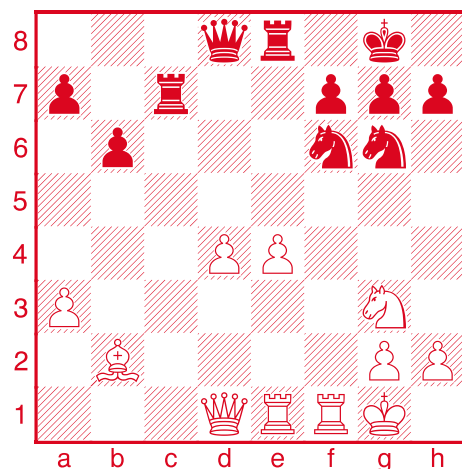
18. ♖e2 looks more natural, but White is aiming for ♖b3xf7.

18...cxd4?

18... ♖d7!? 19.d5 (19. ♖e2 cxd4 20.cxd4 ♖xd4!±) 19...c4!? 20. ♖c1! (20.a4? ♖d3±) 20...h6 with an unbalanced Benoni-like position.

19.cxd4 ♖g6?!

⬠19... ♖c4 also as in the 1952 games.



20. ♖b3

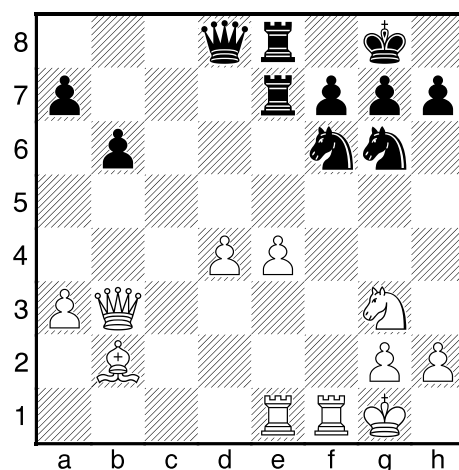
White spent 15 minutes on this. White's central pawn duo give her a clear plus, but if Black doesn't blunder then at some point White will have to turn that positional pressure into a tactical sequence that either creates a

passed pawn (possibly winning an exchange) or gives up a pawn for a kingside attack. In the game, White consistently refuses to "pull the trigger" and Black keeps hanging around...

20. ♖f5! giving up one half of the beautiful central pawn duo is a difficult move to make, but it is tactically justified: 20... ♖xe4 21. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 22.d5 ♖d7 (22... f6 23.d6+; 22... ♖d6 23. ♖xg7 ♖g5 24. ♖h5!+-) 23. ♖d4 ♖f6 24. ♖xg7 ♖xd5 25. ♖h5 f6 26. ♖c4!+-.

20... ♖ce7

20... ♖d7 21.e5 ♖d5 22. ♖e4±.



21.d5?!

Again, too timid!

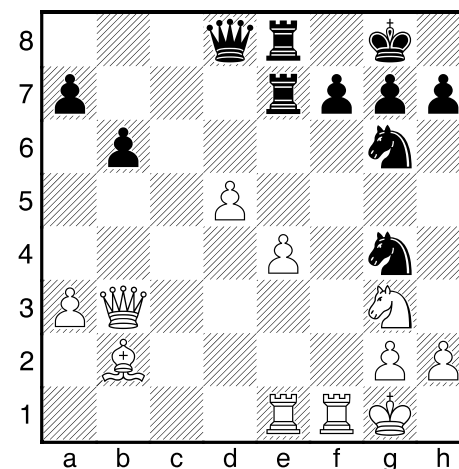
21. ♖xf6! "Is just part of chess culture", is what I imagine Kasparov saying, meaning: you play this move automatically, and calculate the variations afterward.

After the exchange sac Black just gets killed on the dark squares: 21...gxf6 22. ♖f3 ♖d7 (22... ♖e6 23. ♖f1! aiming for ♖h5 or ♖f5.) 23. ♖h5 ♖d6 24. ♖f1 b5 25.d5 ♖b6+ 26. ♖h1+- the only white piece not attacking f6 is her ♖h1.

21... ♖g4

21... ♖xe4 22. ♖f5 ♖±;

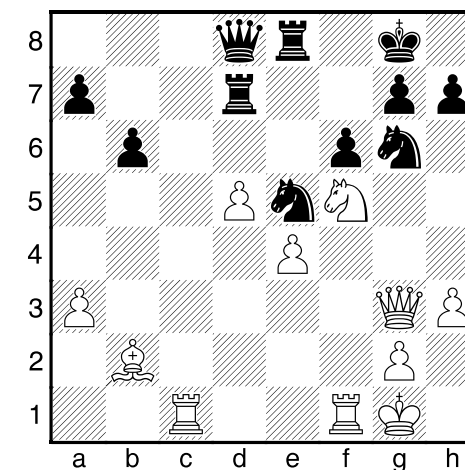
21... ♖d7 22. ♖f5 ♖xe4 23. ♖xe4 (23. ♖c3? f6±) 23... ♖xe4 24.d6! (24. ♖xg7±) 24... ♖df8? 25. ♖h6+!+-.



22.h3

⬠22. ♖f5! ♖xe4 23. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 24.d6! puts the d-pawn on a safe square, blocks the diagonal to h2, and gets closer to promotion. White now threatens both ♖f3 and taking on g7, for example (24. ♖xg7?? ♖c7 25.g3 ♖c5+-) 24...a5? just a random move to demonstrate a threat (... ♖d7 is worse, since then ♖f3 also eyes a8) 25. ♖f3 ♖f4 (25... ♖e8 26.d7+-) 26. ♖e7+!+-.

22... ♖4e5 23. ♖f5 ♖d7 24. ♖g3 f6! 25. ♖c1±



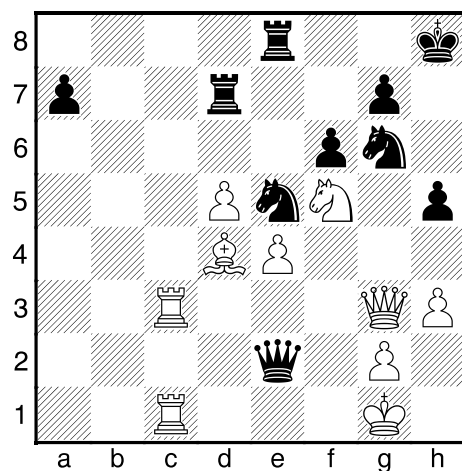
25... ♖h8

25...b5!? is a try, hoping for ... ♖c4, but White stays in charge after 26. ♖c5! ♖c4 27. ♖xb5 ♖xb2 28. ♖xb2 and White is up a protected passed pawn, since 28... ♖xe4?? 29. ♖b8+-.



Chess Canada Gnome

26.a4 b5 27.axb5 ♔b6+
28.♙d4 ♔xb5 29.♖c3 h5?
30.♖fc1 ♔e2



Finally, a threat! White has something to worry about (...♔xe4)....

31.♙xe5?

... and White used 2 of her remaining 9 minutes on this overreaction! Trading the ♙ for a redundant ♘ makes Black's task easier. 31.♙e3 and ♘d4.

31...♘xe5 32.♖c7 ♖ed8
32...♖xc7 33.♖xc7 g5 34.♔e3
♔xe3+ 35.♘xe3 ♖a8 36.d6 ♖d8
37.♘f5 a5 Black should draw.

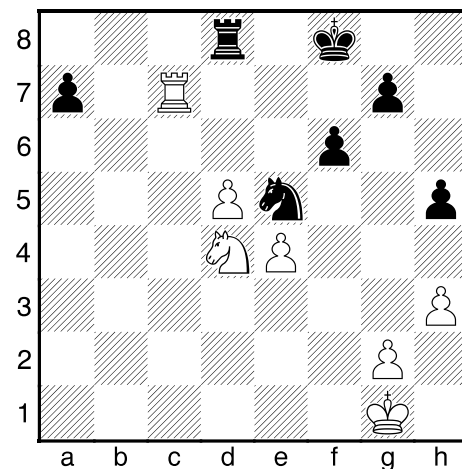
33.♔e3 ♔xe3+ 34.♘xe3
♔g8 35.♘f5 ♔f8
35...g6 36.♘d4 ♖xc7 37.♖xc7

♖a8 38.♘e6 a5 (38...♘f7!?)
39.d6 ♖a6=.

36.♘d4

Both players under 2 minutes.

36...♖xc7 37.♖xc7



37...♖d7!

Qiyu now ahead on the clock.
37...♖a8 is too slow with the ♔ on f8. 38.♘e6+-.

38.♖c8+ ♔f7

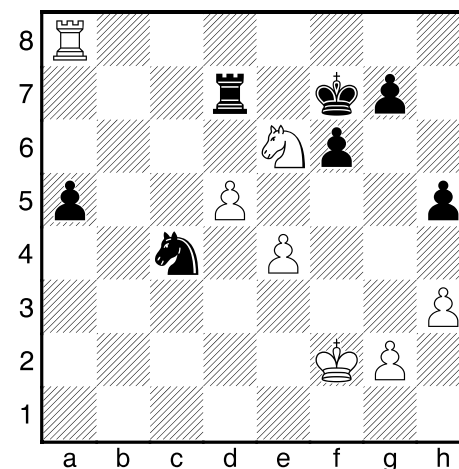
38...♔e7 39.♘f5+ ♔f7 40.♖h8 a5
41.♖a8 g6 42.♘d4 ♘c4 43.♖c8
(43.♔f2 f5! =) 43...♘d6.

39.♘e6 a5 40.♖a8 ♘c4

Avoiding a time-control blunder:
40...♘c6?? 41.dxc6 ♖d1+ 42.♔f2
♔xe6 43.c7+-.

Time control made by both players, who now had an extra 30 min (+30s/move) to complete the game.

41.♔f2



41...g6

Black spent 20 minutes on this. She had a very interesting alternative in ...f5. It's a pawn sac that gives Black enough activity or targets no matter which way White takes. I expect White might have burnt most of her remaining time trying to figure out how to keep an advantage in the resulting endgames.

41...f5!? 42.exf5 ♖xd5 (42...h4! Stockfish =) 43.g4 hxg4 44.hxg4 ♔f6 45.♔g3 (45.♔f3 g5 46.fxg6 ♖d3+=) 45...g5 46.fxg6 ♖d3+□

47.♔h4 ♘e5□= Δ48.g7?? ♘g6+
49.♔h5 ♖h3#;

41...f5!? 42.♖f8+ ♔e7 43.♖xf5
a4 deflecting the white ♖ makes Black's a-pawn dangerous enough to draw. For example:
44.♖g5 a3 45.♖xg7+ ♔d6
46.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 47.♘c5+ ♔d6
48.♘b3 a2 49.g4 (49.♔f3?? ♘d2+-) 49...hxg4 50.hxg4 ♘d2
51.♘a1 ♘xe4+=.

42.♖a6 f5

42...♖d6! 43.♖a7+ ♔e8 44.♘g7+
(44.♖g7 ♖b6! 45.♖xg6 a4
46.♖xf6 ♔e7 47.♖h6 (47.♖f8?
♖xe6) 47...a3 48.♖h7+ ♔d6
49.♖a7 ♔e5=) 44...♔d8=.

43.exf5 gxf5

44.♘f4 h4

45.♖h6 a4

46.♖xh4 a3

47.♖h7+ ♔e8

48.♖h8+ ♔e7

49.♖a8 ♖b7=

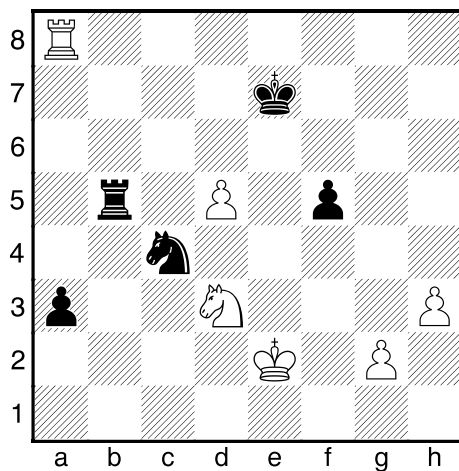
50.♔e2 ♖b5

51.♘d3





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Each player had only 2 minutes here...

51...Rxd5=

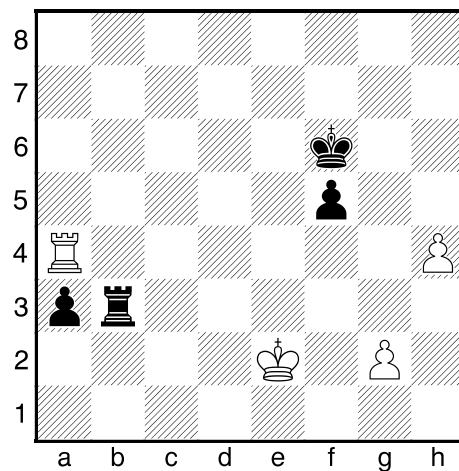
...and Qiyu went down to 32 seconds before capturing here. Black's difficulty is that ...Ra5 and ...Na5 are both plausible (though insufficient) winning attempts.

52.Ra4 Rxd3 53.Rxc4
53.Qxd3?? Nxb2+-.

53...Rb3 54.Ra4 Qf6 55.h4

Ready to start game 2

Each player had a poster-sized photo hanging above her, and each game was live via DGT board and hi-def webcam.



55...Qg6

The simplest.

It doesn't lose, but there's no point freeing the white Q just to get your own pawn to a2 when

it is never going to get to a1:
55...Rb2+ 56.Qf3 a2 57.Ra6+
Qg7 58.g3 Rh2 59.Qf4 Rf2+=
60.Qg5 Qh7 61.Ra7+ Qg8
62.Qg6 Qf8= would be a drawn
but ulcer-inducing line.

56.g4 fxg4 57.Rxg4+ Qh5
58.Ra4 Rb2+

Gives White a chance to lose by going to the back rank.

59.Qd3 Rh2 60.Qc3 Rxb4
61.Rxa3

$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

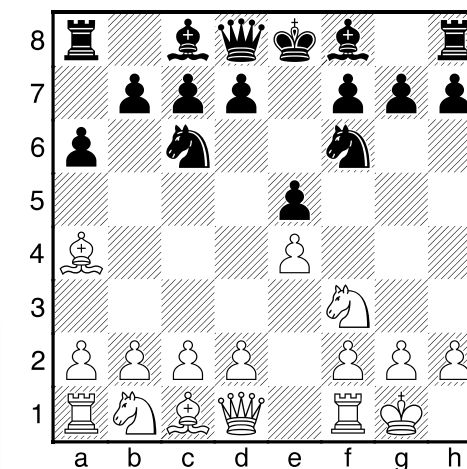
Zhou, Qiyu (2247)
Pogonina, Natalija (2447)

C84

WWCCh 2017 Tehran (1.2),
12.02.2017

Notes by John Upper

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Qb5 a6
4.Qa4 Nf6 5.0-0



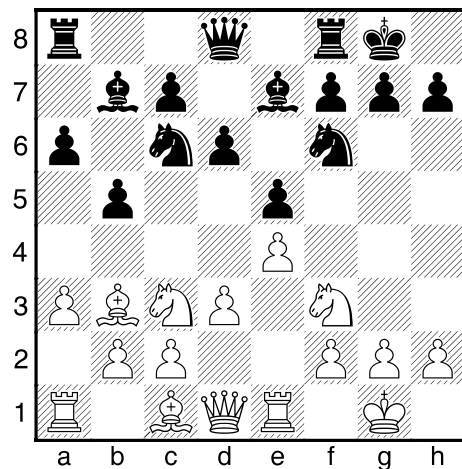
5...b5

We transpose to the following elite game at move 16, but in Zhou-Pogonina White is a tempo up: 5...Qe7 6.Qe1 b5 7.Qb3 0-0 8.h3 Qb7 9.d3 d6 10.a3 Na5 11.Qa2 c5 12.Nbd2 Nc6 13.Nf1 Qc8 14.c3 Qe6 15.Qxe6 fxe6 16.Ng3 Nd7 17.Qe3 d5 18.exd5 exd5 19.a4 Rb8 20.axb5 axb5 21.b3 Ra8



½-½ [Kasparov \(2804\)–Topalov \(2757\)](#) Linares, 2005.

6.♘b3 ♘b7 7.d3 ♘e7 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♖e1 d6 10.a3



10...♘b8

10...♘a5!? could lead to the Kasparov–Topalov game (above).

10...♖d7 11.♘e2 ♘d8 12.♘g3:

12...c5!N;

12...♘e6 13.♘a2 ♖fe8 14.♘g5 d5 15.♘xe6 ♖xe6 (0-1, 40) [Caruana,F \(2808\)–Carlsen,M \(2853\)](#) Saint Louis, 2015.

12... g6 13.c3 c5 14.♘a2 ♘e6 15.b4 ♖ac8 16.bxc5 ♘xc5 17.♘h6 ♖fe8 18.d4 ♘e6 19.♘g5? (♞19.♖c1=) 19...♘xg5 (19...♖xc3?? 20.♘xe6 fxe6

21.dxe5 dxe5 22.♖xd7 ♘xd7 23.♘xe6++-) 20.♘xg5 ♖xc3 21.♘e2 ♖c7 22.♘g3 ♖g4 23.♖d2? ♘xe4♞-+ 24.♖a5 (24.♘xe4 ♘xe4 25.f3 ♘xg5-+) 24...♘xg3-+ 25.hxg3 ♖ec8 26.♘xe7 ♖xe7 27.dxe5 dxe5 Black is up two pawns and won easily. **28.♖ad1 ♖g7 29.♖b6 h5 30.♖d6 ♖ce8 31.♖c1 ♖d4 32.♖b4 ♖xb4 33.axb4 ♖d8 34.♖c5 ♖d2 35.♘b3 ♖d4 0-1** [Wei,Y \(2706\)–Zhou,J \(2635\)](#) Shenzhen, 2016.

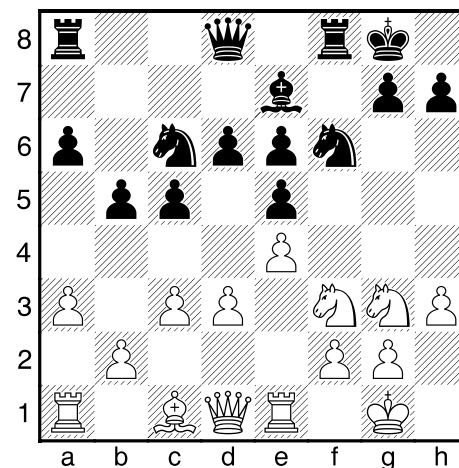
11.♘e2

Both sides has played quickly up to here, possibly because they were following the this Pogonina game from the previous year's Russian Women's Team Championship:

11.a4 b4 12.♘e2 ♘bd7 13.♘g3 ♘c5 14.♘c4 ♖e8 15.a5 ♖b8 16.c3 bxc3 17.bxc3 ♘f8 (17... d5 18.exd5 ♘xd5 19.♘xe5 ♘xc4=) 18.♘a3 ♘e6 19.♖d2 ♘c6 20.d4 exd4 21.cxd4 d5 22.♘xf8 ♖xf8 23.♘xa6 dxe4 24.♘e5 ♘a8 25.♖ad1 ♖d6?! 26.♘c4 g6 27.♖h6 ♖e7 28.f4? (♞28.h3; ♞28.a6) 28...exf3 29.gxf3 (29.♘xg6? f2+!-+) 29...♘d5

30.♘e4 ♖b2 31.♘xd5 ♘xd5 32.♘d7?? ♘xe4-+ 33.♘xf8 ♖g5+?? (33...♘g5♞-+) 34.♖xg5 ♘xg5 35.fxe4= ♘f3+ 36.♖f1 ♘xh2+ 37.♖g1 ♘f3+ 38.♖f1 ♘h2+ 39.♖g1 ♘f3+ 40.♖f1 ♘h2+ 41.♖g1 ♘f3+ ½-½ [Shuvalova,P \(2320\)–Pogonina,N \(2490\)](#) Sochi, 2016.

11...c5 12.♘g3 ♘c6 13.c3 ♘c8 14.h3 ♘e6 15.♘xe6 fxe6

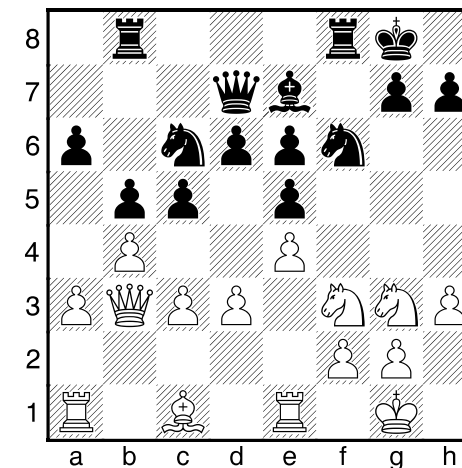


This is the same position as [Kasparov–Topalov](#) (note to move 5), but there it was Black to move. The difference is that Topalov played ...♘a5, and White saved his ♘ with ♘a2, which cost him a tempo when he then exchanged with ♘x♘e6.

16.b4!

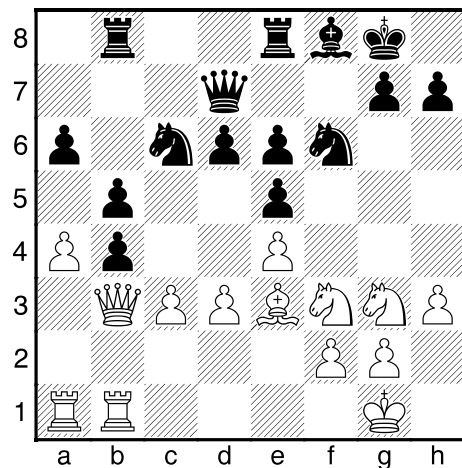
16.d4 exd4 17.cxd4 e5 18.d5 ♘d4 19.♘xd4 cxd4 20.♘d2 ♖c8= 21.♖c1 (21.♘f5 ♖f7 then ...♘f8.) 21...♖d7 (½-½, 76) [Kallio,H \(2502\)–Vajda,L \(2539\)](#) Budapest, 2002.

16...♖d7 17.♖b3 ♖ab8



Qiyu had been playing almost instantly up to here, and now had 94 minutes on the clock (4 more than she started with), while Black was down to 65. However, a series of long thinks on each of her next three moves gave back most of that time advantage...

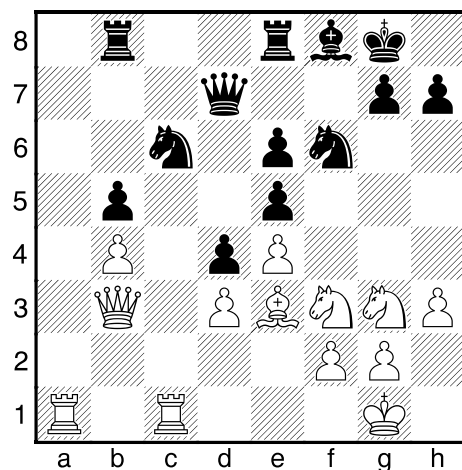
18.♘e3 ♖fe8 19.♖eb1 ♘f8 20.a4 cxb4



After this, times were now 49m v 43m.

21.axb5 axb5 22.cxb4 d5 23.♖c1± d4

23...♘xb4? 24.♘xe5 ♔d6 25.♘f3 threatening forks with e5 and ♕c5. 25...♘d7 26.♖a5± with pressure on the b-pawn.



24.♕d2



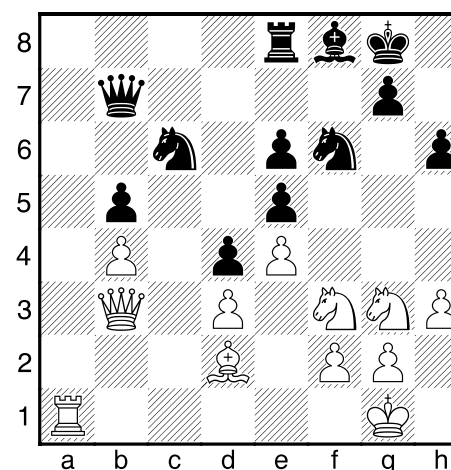
Not bad, but White had better:
24.♖a6!:

a) 24...dxe3 25.♖cxc6±;
b) 24...♘xb4? 25.♘xe5 ♔d6 26.♘f5±- ♔b7 27.♖xe6+-
c) 24... ♖ec8 25.♕d2 threatening ♖cxc6 then ♘xe5. 25...♔e8 (25...♔h8 26.♖cxc6 ♖xc6 27.♘xe5 ♖xa6± 28.♘xd7 ♘xd7 29.♘e2± Materially, Black is ahead with ♖v ♔, but Black's central pawns are vulnerable.) 26.♘g5! ♘d8 27.♖xc8 ♖xc8 28.f4! (28.♘xe6? ♘xe6 29.♔xe6+ ♔xe6 30.♖xe6 ♖c2±; 28.♘f5!?) 28...exf4 29.♘e2!± and with the pawns broken up, White's ♘s run riot.

24...♖a8!±

Preventing ♖a6 as in the note above.

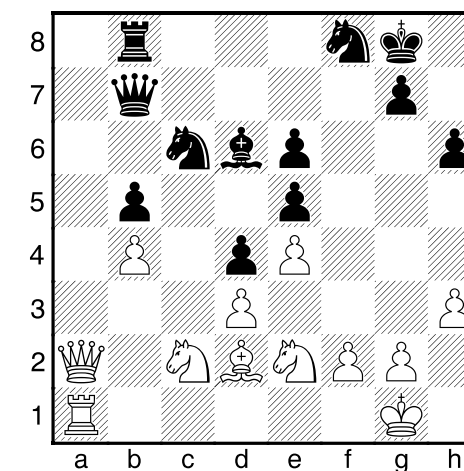
25.♘g5 ♖xa1 26.♖xa1 h6 27.♘f3 ♔b7



The big island of pawns in the

center keeps White's ♕ inactive and leaves few good squares for any of the ♘s. The isolated pawns on e6 and b4 are the natural targets, but both can be sufficiently defended. Maybe White should consider moving her ♘g3 to g4: ♘g3-f1-h2-g4. Black could kick it away with ...h5, but that weakens g5. It's a slow maneuver, but this is a nearly closed position, so everything is slow.

28.♘e2 ♘d7 29.♘e1 ♕d6 30.♘c2 ♘f8 31.♔a2 ♖b8



32.f4?!

This undoubles Black's e-pawns and gives her an outpost on e5. If Black puts a ♘ on e5 then her d4-pawn could be weak; though it is not vulnerable now because



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of the pin on b6-g1 diagonal. It doesn't give Black an advantage, but it looks like an unwise attempt at activity, when the position would be slightly better (and unloseable) with queenside manoeuvring.

32. ♖c1 ♕e7 33. ♖a3 ♖b7

34. ♖a6 ♘b8 White's not making any progress, but hasn't given Black anything to hope for either.

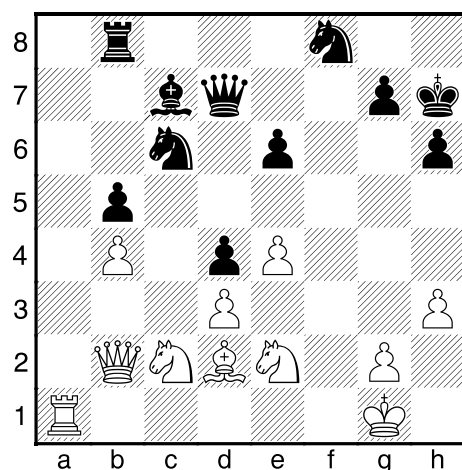
32...exf4 33. ♘xf4

33. ♘cxd4?? ♖b6-+.

33...♖e7 34. ♖a6 ♖c7

35. ♘e2 ♖d7 36. ♖a2 ♔h7

37. ♖b2 ♙c7



Black threatens ...♘g6 then ...♖d6 with strong control of the dark squares.

38. ♙f4 ♖d8 39. ♖f1 ♘g6

40. ♙xc7 ♖xc7 41. ♘a3

♖e7 42. ♘xb5 ♘ge5!

42...e5! gets the pawn back immediately: 43. ♘a3 (43. ♖a1

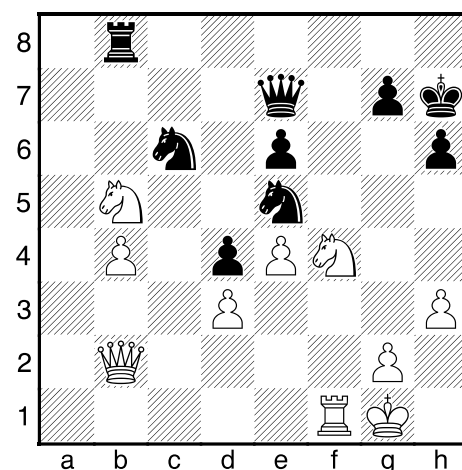
♘xb4 44. ♖a7? ♖c5-+ Black

wins a piece.) 43...♘xb4 44. ♖d2

(44. ♘c1? ♘f4+) 44...♖a8 45. ♘c4

♖a2 46. ♖d1+.

43. ♘f4 ♖b8



44. ♘a3?

44. ♘xd4 ♖a7 (44...♖xb4?

45. ♘xc6 ♘xc6 46. ♖c3±)

45. ♘fxe6 ♖xb4 (45...♖e8

46. ♖f2± (46.b5!+-) 46...♘xd3?

47. ♖f5+ g6 48. ♘f8+-)

46. ♖c3 ♘xd4 47. ♖xb4 ♘xe6+

(47...♘df3+!? is exciting, for

a few moves: 48. ♔h1 ♘xd3

49. ♘f8+ ♔h8 50. ♘g6+

♔h7 51. ♘f8+ (=) 48. ♔h1

♘xd3 49. ♖d6= possibly more fun to play as Black, but objectively equal.

44...♖xb4 45. ♖c2 ♖b7

46. ♘b1?

♘46. ♘c4= ♘b4 47. ♖d2 ♘xc4

48. dxc4 the pawn on d4 looks

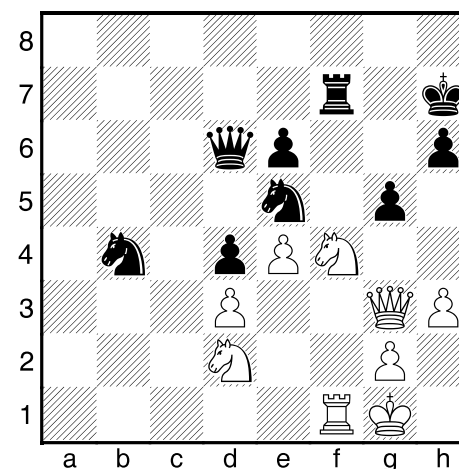
more dangerous than it is:

48...♖g5 (48...e5 49. ♘d5=)

49. e5= or 49. ♖d1=.

46...♘b4! 47. ♖f2 ♖d6

48. ♖g3 ♖f7 49. ♘d2 g5!+

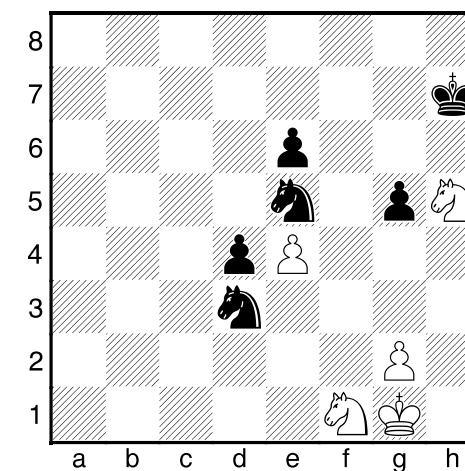


50. ♘h5?!

After this, times were: 1 min vs 4 min; but even with an hour, White could spend the time only hoping for a miracle. 50. ♘e2 ♖xf1+

51. ♘xf1 ♘bxd3+.

50...♖xf1+ 51. ♘xf1 ♘bxd3-+ 52. h4 ♖e7 53. hxg5 ♖xg5 54. ♖xg5 hxg5



White's only hope is to trade her ♘s for Black's pawns, but there's no realistic way that can happen.

55. ♘d2

55. ♘f6+ ♔g6 56. ♘e8 ♘c4-+ is no better.

55...♔g6 56. ♘g3 ♘f4

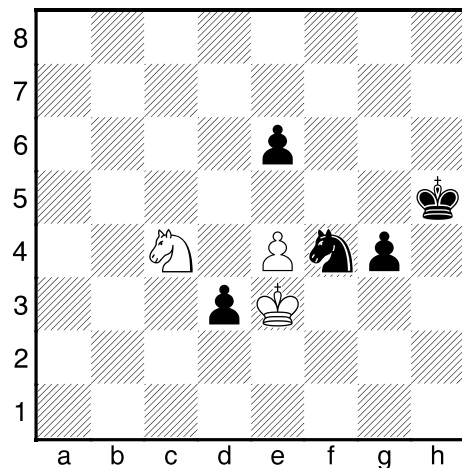
57. ♔f1 ♘g4 58. ♘e2 ♘e3+

59. ♔f2 ♘xe2 60. ♔xe2

♘xg2 61. ♘f3 ♘f4+ 62. ♔d2

d3 63. ♘e5+ ♔h5 64. ♔e3 g4

65. ♘c4



**65...g3 66.♔f3 g2 67.♔f2
♔g5 68.♘d2 ♔g4 69.♘f3
g1♕+!**

Deflection sac to promote the
d-pawn.

0-1



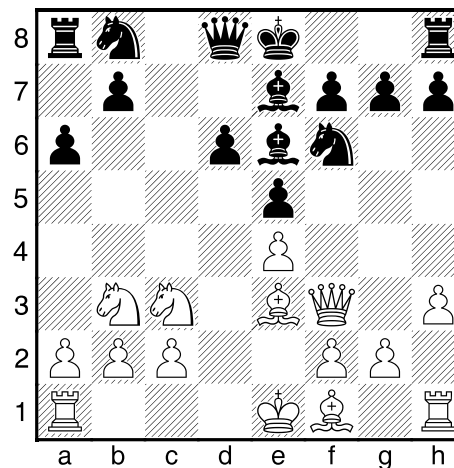
On her way back from Tehran, Qiyu visited England, and had time to play in a chess tournament in **Blackpool**, which she won. Here is one game.

**Zhou, Qiyu (2287)
Fallowfield, Jeremy R
(2069)**

B90

*Blackpool Chess Conference
Blackpool (5), 12.03.2017
Notes by John Upper*

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6
6.♙e3 e5 7.♘b3 ♙e6 8.h3!?
♙e7 9.♔f3**

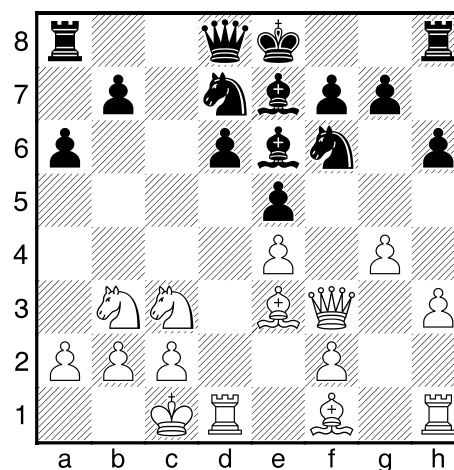


A system that's been tried a
couple of times by Shirov, Ni Hua
and others.

9...♘bd7

9...d5? 10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♘xd5
♙xd5 12.♔g3 wins e5 or g7 since
12...♙f6? 13.0-0-0 will win the
♘d5 with c2-c4 or ♙e3-f3: 13...b5
14.♙e2 e4 15.f3+-.

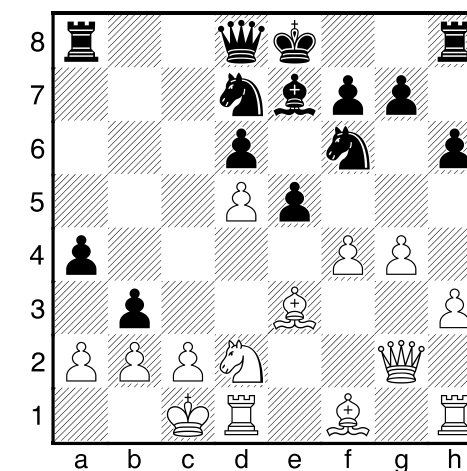
10.g4 h6 11.0-0-0



11...b5

11...♖c8 is more common, and
better-scoring, e.g. 12.♘d5
♙xd5 13.exd5 ♘b6 14.h4 ♔c7
15.c3 ♘bxd5 16.♙d2 (16.♖xd5?
♔c6 17.♔f5 g6 18.♖xd6
gxf5) 16...♘b6 17.g5 ♘fd7
18.gxh6 gxh6 19.♔b1 (½-½,
54) [Kamsky, G \(2732\)–Gelfand, B
\(2733\)](#) Kazan, 2011.

**12.♔g2 b4 13.♘d5 ♙xd5
14.exd5 a5 15.f4 a4 16.♘d2
b3!?**



Not the only move, but
thematically sac-ing a pawn to
open lines at the White ♔.

17.axb3

17.cxb3? axb3 and White
can't close the queenside with
18.a3?? ♔c7+ 19.♘c4 ♖a4



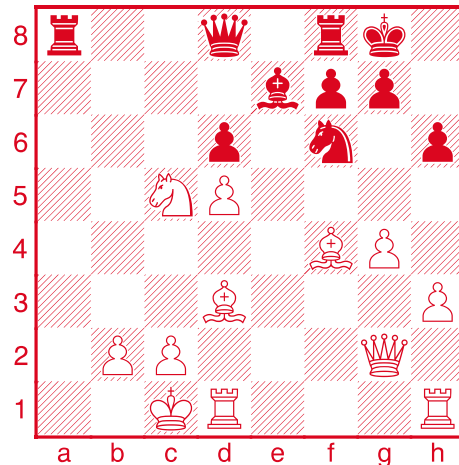
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20. ♖e2 exf4 21. ♔d4 (21. ♔xf4 ♜b6-+) 21...0-0 threatening ♖c8, and here 22. ♖xe7 ♖e8-+ traps the ♔ before going back to the attack.

17...axb3 18. ♖xb3 exf4 19. ♔xf4 0-0 20. ♔d3 ♜c5 20...♖b6 is the computer's choice.

21. ♖xc5



21...♖a1+?

This does force White's ♔ to the center, but because Black has to spend a tempo recapturing on c5, checking on a1 has the effect of trading Black's well-developed ♖a8 for White's undeveloped ♖h1.

After 21...dxc5! Black may

have been worried about 22.d6 which looks like it wins the ♔e7, since 22...♔xd6 23. ♔xd6 ♖xd6? 24. ♔h7+- wins the ♔ for White. But Black has clear improvements in this line. First, 22...♔xd6! 23. ♔xd6 ♖a1+ 24. ♔d2 ♖xd1+ 25. ♔xd1 ♖xd6 When material is equal, but White's ♔ is more exposed than Black's.

But Black has even better: 21...dxc5! 22.d6 c4!!:

23. ♔xc4 ♖a1+ 24. ♔d2 ♔xd6 25. ♖xa1 ♔xf4+ 26. ♔e1 ♖e8+ 27. ♔e2 (27. ♔f1 ♜e4) 27...♜e4 with a winning check coming from either d2, or a5 or g3 or h4;

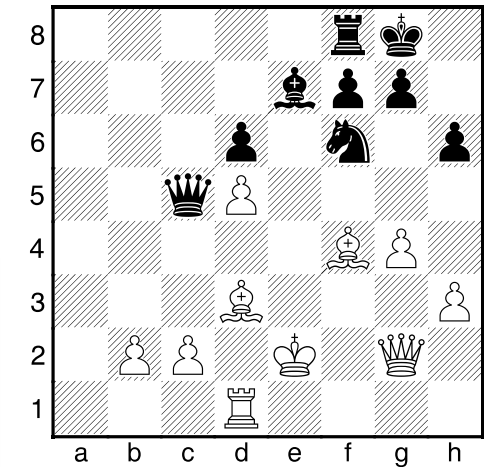
23.dxe7 ♖xe7 White is up a piece, but has to give it back immediately with c2-c3 immediately or will get destroyed by ...c3:

Blackpool silverware

24. ♔xc4 ♖a1+ 25. ♔d2 ♖b4+-+ regains at least a piece with a huge attack; 24. ♖e2 ♖a1+ 25. ♔d2 ♖b4+ followed soon by ...♖e8+ snagging the ♖; 24. ♔e2 c3! 25.bxc3 ♜e4-+; 24.c3! cxd3 25. ♖xd3 ♜e4!.



22. ♔d2 ♖xd1+ 23. ♖xd1 ♖a5+ 24. ♔e2 ♖xc5



White is up a pawn with the ♔-pair, and although her ♔ is in the center, it is her opponent's ♔ that is in danger. White plays the rest forcefully and accurately.

25. ♔e3! ♖b4?!

Of course not 25...♖xd5?? 26. ♔h7+- 25...♖c7 coordinating with the kingside.

26.g5! hxg5 27. ♖xg5

And Black has to give up a piece to avoid getting mated: 27. ♖xg5 ♖b7 (27...♖e8 28. ♖g1 g6 29. ♔xg6 ♜xd5 30. ♔h7+-) 28. ♖g1 ♜e8 and White has a choice of wins, e.g. 29. ♖h5 ♜f6 30. ♖h6 g6 31. ♔xg6.

1-0



Chess Canada Gnome

The **2016 Continental Women's Chess Championship** took place in Colima, Mexico, November 6-12, 2016. It was a 9-round event with the winner collecting \$5,000 US and qualifying for the next stage of the Women's World Championship (2016-18 cycle).

The tournament was won by **WGM Deysi Cori** (Peru) who started with 6.5/7 and had a 2600+ TPR, before giving quick draws in the last two rounds to cruise home with 7.5/9, a full 1.5 points ahead of second-place finisher IM Carolina Lujan from Argentina.

Canadian Champion FM **Qiyu Zhou** played. She scored +3 =4 -2, including a draw with Lujan in round 2, a loss to Cori in round 4, and a final round loss to the 3rd place finisher.

Chess Canada has two games: Qiyu's loss to the winner, and a crazily complicated Lopez from round 6 against WIM Ayelen Martinez from Argentina.

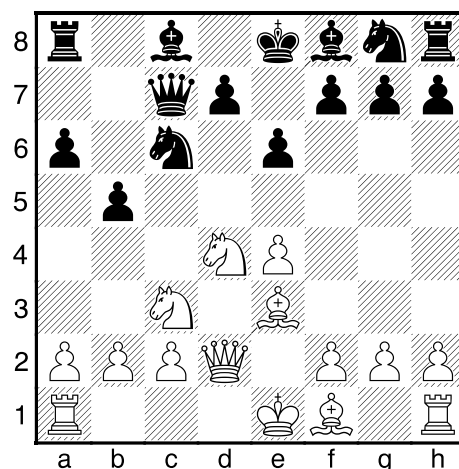
Zhou, Qiyu (2312) Cori, Deysi (2430)

B48

2016 Continental Colima (4),
08.11.2016

Notes by John Upper

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♘c6 5.♗c3 a6
6.♕e3 ♔c7 7.♙d2 b5



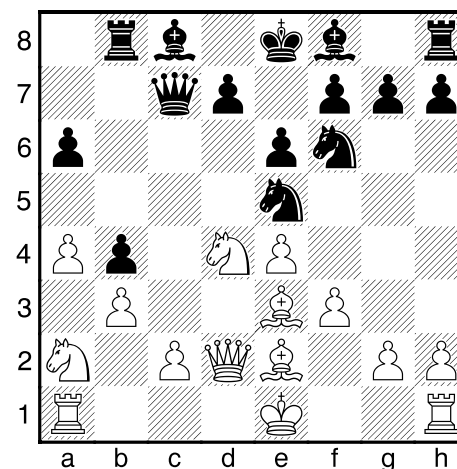
8.a4?

8.0-0-0 ♗f6 (8...♕b7) 9.♕f4
♙b6 10.♗xc6 ♙xc6 11.f3 ♕b7
12.♕d3 b4 13.♗e2 ♕c5 14.♙b1
♙b6 15.g4 d5∞ (1-0, 37) **Garcia Pantoja,R (2456)–Cordova,E (2610)** Oaxtepec, 2016.;

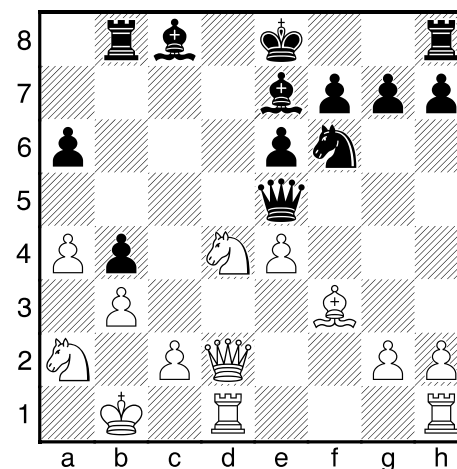
8.♗xc6 ♙xc6 9.0-0-0 ♕b7
10.f3 ♔c8 11.g4 ♗f6 12.g5 ♗h5
13.♕h3 ♕e7 14.♕g4 g6 15.♕xh5±

(1-0, 34) **Shirov,A (2695)–Dubov,D (2629)** Moscow, 2013.

8...b4= 9.♗a2 ♗f6 10.f3
♔b8 11.♕e2 ♗e5 12.b3?!
♙c3



12...d5̄ 13.0-0-0 dxe4
14.♕f4 ♗d5 15.♕xe5 ♙xe5
16.fxe4 ♗f6! 17.♕f3 ♕e7
18.♙b1



18...♕b7

Black can't be too unhappy about giving up the b4-pawn, since that will open both the b-file and the a3 diagonal, but allowing the ♗a2 back into the game gives White her once chance...

18...0-0? 19.♗c6±;
18...♔b6! defends b4 and c6, giving Black time to finish developing.

19.♗xb4! ♔c8
19...0-0?? 20.♗bc6±.





20. ♖e2??

After this it is all one-way traffic, with all Black's pieces attacking the white ♔.

20. ♖d5!! is spectacular, but ultimately it just gives back a pawn to trade some pieces and finish developing:

20... ♖xe4 21. ♖xe4 exd5?

22. ♖f5±;

20... exd5 21. exd5 ♖xd5 (21... 0-0 22. d6± attacking both ♖s.)

22. ♖he1 ♖e4□ (22... ♖d6?

23. ♖f5+-) 23. ♖xe4 ♖xe4

24. ♖f3□ ♖xc2+ (24... ♖f5??

25. ♖xe4+- and check on d7; 24... ♖xc2?? 25. ♖d7++-) 25. ♖xc2=.

20... ♖c7 21. ♖d4?!

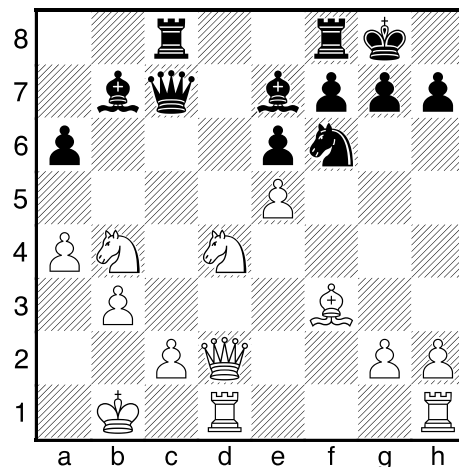
White was under 2 minutes, but there are no good moves to be found even with much more time.

21. ♖g3 ♖xb4? (21... a5!±)

22. ♖xb4 ♖xc2+ 23. ♖a1= Black got the pawn back, but White threatens ♖c1 and ♖f5.;

21. e5 ♖xf3 22. gxf3 ♖xe5±.

21... 0-0-+ 22. e5



Black has too many good choices.

22... ♖e4

22... ♖xb4! 23. ♖xb4 ♖xf3!

24. gxf3 (24. ♖xf3 ♖xc2+-) 24... ♖d5-+.

23. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 24. ♖xa6? ♖b7!

Trapping the ♖ while keeping the ♖-pair slicing across White's porous queenside.

25. ♖e2 ♖xc2 26. ♖xc2 ♖xb3+ 27. ♖c1 ♖g5+ 28. ♖d2 ♖xc2#

0-1

Martinez, Ayelen (2238) Zhou, Qiyu (2312)

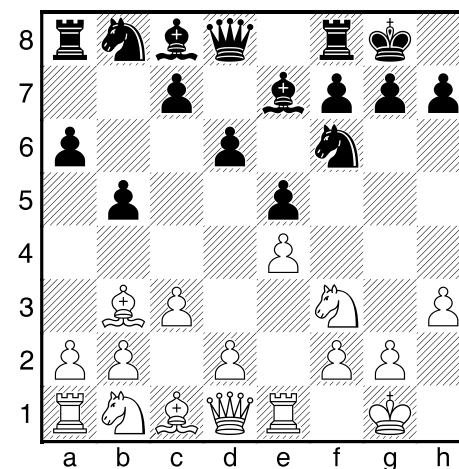
C95

2016 Continental Colima (6.3), 10.11.2016

Notes by Keith MacKinnon & John Upper

The following game was first published on the CFC Newsfeed: <http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/913>

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♖b5 a6 4. ♖a4 ♖f6 5. 0-0 ♖e7 6. ♖e1 b5 7. ♖b3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. h3 ♖b8



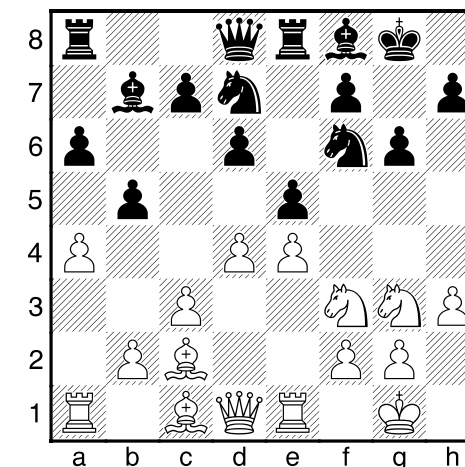
The Breyer Variation is a popular choice nowadays. The basic idea is to reroute the Knight to d7, fianchetto with ♖b7, and then use the c-pawn as needed to

contest the center. 9... ♖a5 is the classical continuation.

10. d4

10. a4!? is a seldom-played possibility, but it doesn't appear to yield much 10... ♖b7 11. axb5 axb5 12. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 13. d3.

10... ♖bd7 11. ♖bd2 ♖b7 12. ♖c2 ♖e8 13. ♖f1 ♖f8 14. ♖g3 g6 15. a4



It's clear that both players were booked up. So far, all of White's moves are the most common in the position.

15... c6

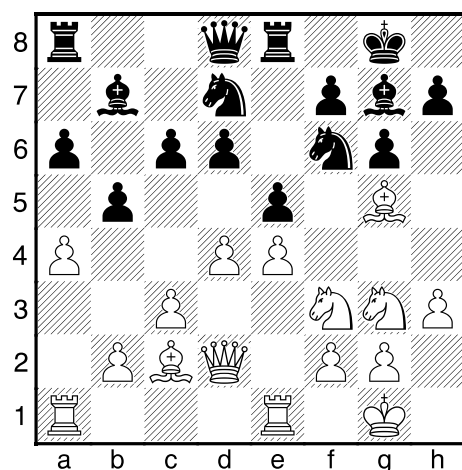
This is a solid way of playing the position, but my feeling is that White gets a small edge.



Chess Canada Gnome

15...c5 would be my first reaction here – contesting the centre and not minding a closed position 16.d5 c4! And an unclear position with chances for both sides emerges. 17.♗g5 is scoring best for White. It provokes ...h6 before heading back to e3 17...h6 18.♗e3 ♖c7 recommended by [GM Roiz](#), whose opinion is based on this game: 19.♖d2 h5 20.♖a3 ♘c5 21.♖ea1 ♗g7 22.♖c1 ♘fd7 23.axb5 axb5 24.♖xa8 ♖xa8 25.♖xa8+ ♗xa8 26.♖a1 ♗b7 (1/2-1/2, 47) [Kokarev,D \(2611\)–Khismatullin,D \(2656\)](#) St. Petersburg, 2013.

16.♗g5 ♗g7 17.♖d2



17...♖c7

We're still in established opening theory here, but I can't help but

feel that Black's play has been a little too tentative. White has a clear edge.

17...♖e7:

18.b4 ♗b6 19.♗b3 bxa4 20.♗xa4 ♘xa4 21.♖xa4 ♖e6 22.♗h6 ♗h8 23.♘g5 ♖e7 24.f4 exf4 25.♖xf4 ♘d5! 26.♖d2 f6 27.♘f3 ♗b6 28.♖aa1 ♖f7 1/2-1/2 [Kovalev,V \(2557\)–Sargissian,G \(2671\)](#) Minsk, 2014.

18.b3 ♖ac8 19.axb5 cxb5 20.d5 ♖c7 21.♗e3 ♖ec8 22.♘e2 ♘c5= (1-0, 106) [Hou,Y \(2673\)–Kosintseva,T \(2483\)](#) Beijing (blitz), 2014.

18.♗h6 ♗h8

18...♘f8 19.b4 ♗e6 20.♗b3 ♘d7 21.♖ad1 bxa4 22.♗xa4 a5 23.bxa5 ♖xa5 24.♗b3 ♘df8 25.♗xg7 ♖xg7 26.♘f1± 1-0 (70) [Kosteniuk,A \(2498\)–Zhao,X \(2496\)](#) Moscow, 2011.

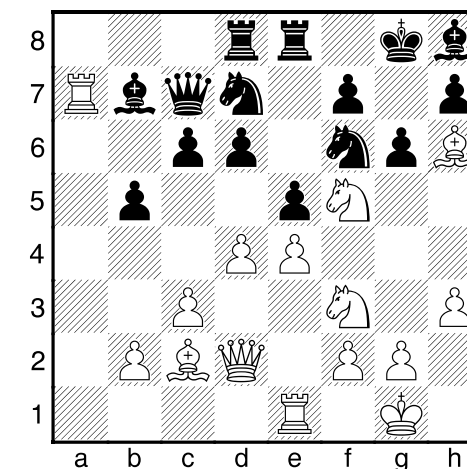
19.♘f5!N

A strong novelty, putting Qiyu under a lot of pressure. White's advantage stems from more active pieces and a space advantage.

19.♗b3 c5 20.♘g5 c4 21.♗c2 d5 22.dxe5 ♘xe5 23.f4?! ♘eg4! 24.hxg4 ♘xg4 25.e5 (25.♘xf7

♖b6+?) 25...♘xh6 26.♘f3 ♘g4± (1-0, 40) [Polgar,J \(2687\)–Golod,V \(2599\)](#) Netanya, 2009.

19...♖ad8 20.axb5 axb5 21.♖a7



21...d5?

The first mistake of the game but also a very serious one. Qiyu understandably tries to untangle her position somewhat by hitting back in the centre. There is a major tactical flaw, however. ♖21...♘f8 or 21...♘b6.

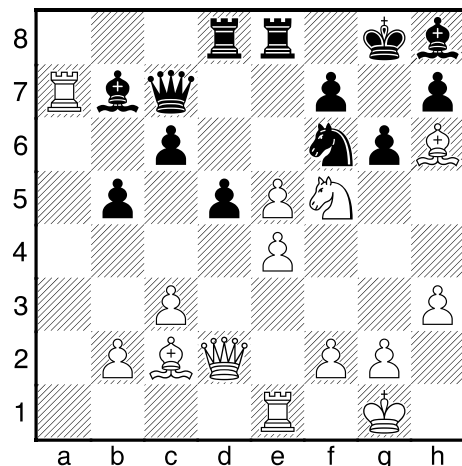
22.♖g5?

22.♘xe5! ♘xe5 (22...dxe4 23.♘xf7!+- ♖b6 (23...♖xf7 24.♖xb7 (24.♗b3+ ♘d5 25.♖xb7+-) 24...♖xb7 25.♘d6+) 24.♖xb7 ♖xb7 25.♖g5 and Black cannot survive.) 23.dxe5





Analysis Diagram



a) 23...♖xe5 24.♙f4+-;

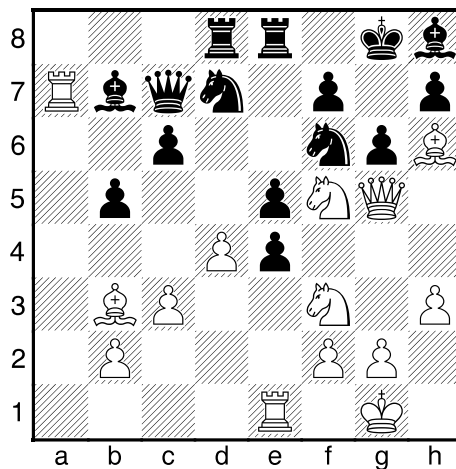
b) 23...♙b8 24.exf6 ♔xa7 25.♘e7+ ♖xe7 26.fxe7 ♖e8 27.♙g5! (27.exd5 cxd5 should also win.) 27...♙c5 (27...f6? 28.♙e3 ♙a2 29.♙c5+- and the e7 pawn is a monster.) 28.e5! A neat move aiming for ♙f6; just compare the activity of the Bishops.

c) 23...dxe4 24.♘d6+- ♖xe5 25.♖xb7 ♙xd6 26.♙xd6 ♖xd6 27.♙f4! is an important final nuance, but 27.♖xe4 is strong as well – taking advantage of back rank problems.

22...dxe4!

And Qiyu is right back in it!

23.♙b3



23...♘b6?

23...♖b8 is a hard move to play – but necessary to defend against ♙xf7+ and ♖xb7 followed by ♘d6+ ideas. After 23...♖b8 24.♖xe4! Black has a choice of evils:

a) 24... c5 25.dxe5±.

b) 24...♘xe4? 25.♙e7! is the wildest position I've seen in a while! Black's getting checkmated in a few more moves.

c) 24...♘c5? almost works, but the computer shows a very pretty line: 25.♖xe5 (25.dxc5? ♘xe4?) 25...♘xb3 26.♙f4!! ♖xe5 27.♘xe5 ♘d5 (27...♖c8 28.♘d6

♙xd6 29.♘xg6 ♙xf4 30.♘e7#) 28.♘xg6!! ♘xf4 (28...hxc6 29.♘e7+ ♙xe7 30.♙xb8+-) 29.♘fe7+ ♙xe7 30.♘xe7#.

24.♘xe5

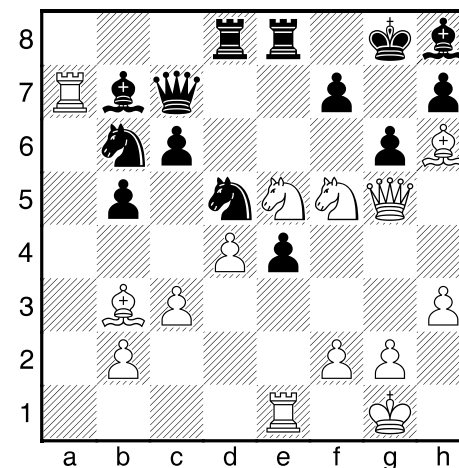
24.♙xf7+!! also keeps a big advantage 24...♙xf7 (24...♙xf7 25.♘xe5 ♖xe5 26.dxe5 ♘bd5+-) 25.♘xe5+:

a) 25...♙g8 26.♘xg6+-;

b) 25...♖xe5 26.dxe5 gxf5 (26...♘fd5 27.♖xb7+-) 27.exf6 ♙xf6 28.♙xf5+-;

c) 25...♙e6 26.♘g3+- and Black is in big trouble with her King so exposed.

24...♘fd5

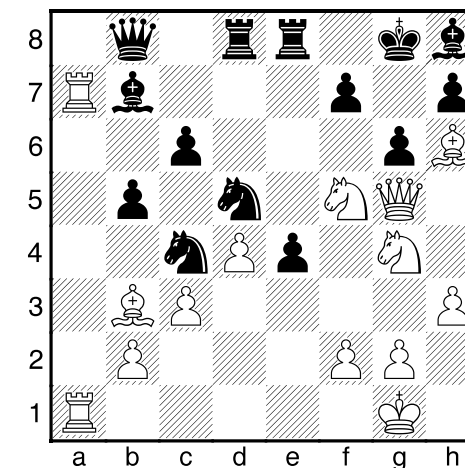


The right idea – limiting the b3 Bishop's scope.

25.♘g4

25.♙h4! f6 (25...♖a8 26.♖xa8 ♙xa8 27.♖xe4+- White is up material, her pieces are better, and her attack continues.) 26.♘xg6! hxc6 27.♙f4 All of White's pieces are coordinated perfectly. Here's the line my Komodo engine gives: 27...♙c8 28.♘h6+ ♙f8 29.♘g4 ♙g7 30.♙h6 ♘d7 31.♙xg7+ ♙xg7 32.♙h6+ ♙f7 33.♙h7+ ♙e6 34.♙xg6 ♙d6 35.♘h6+-.

25...♙b8 26.♖ea1 ♘c4



27.♙h4

27.♘fe3! ♘dxe3 (27...♘cxe3 28.fxe3 ♖d6 29.♙xd5 cxd5 30.♙h4+- threatening ♙f4.)



Chess Canada

Gnome

28.fxe3+- (28.♖xe3+-) 28...f5 opening the 7th to defend g7. 29.♗f6+ ♕xf6 30.♔xf6 ♖d7 31.♖1a4!! a preposterous but effective way to force open the a2-diagonal. 31...♖f7 32.♔h4 bxa4 33.♕xc4 ♔xa7 34.♔f6 #2.

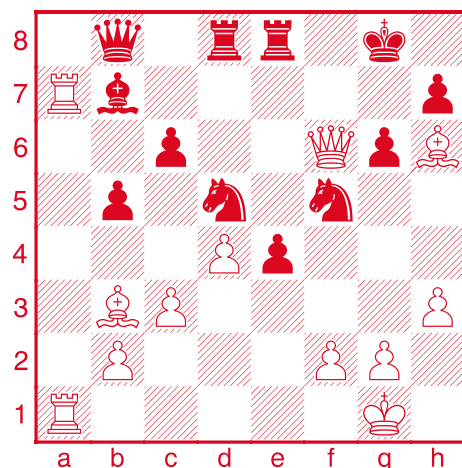
27...f6?

♞27...♖d7±.

28.♗fe3 ♗cxe3 29.♗xf6+??

Playing for mate, but any of the three recaptures on e3 leaves White with a winning advantage.

29...♕xf6 30.♔xf6 ♗f5□



Defending the mate on g7, saving the hanging piece on e3, and threatening to chop the attacker of h6. White resigned.

It is always shocking when your opponent comes back with a move you had overlooked (30... ♗f5), but it's necessary to compose yourself and try to find the best move. If we take stock, White is down a piece for a pawn, but the exposed Black King and the terrible ♕b7 give White big compensation.

In fact, White can save the game with 31.♕f4!=. Now Black to try for the win with 31...♔c8 32.♕e5 ♖xe5 33.dxe5 ♖f8 34.♕xd5+ cxd5 35.♔b6 ♖f7□ (35...♕c6 36.♖c7+-) 36.♔h2 major prophylaxis against ...d4 and ...e3 followed by ...♔c2. Instead, Qiyu would do best to go for the draw after ...♔xf4: 31...♔xf4 32.♖xb7 ♖f8 33.♕xd5+ cxd5 34.♔e6+ ♔h8 35.♖aa7 ♔c1+= with a repetition.

0-1

World Cadet

The **2016 World Cadet Chess Championship** was held October 19-30, 2016 Batumi, Georgia.

The World Cadet Chess Championship is the younger

half of what used to be the World Youth Chess Championship. 722 players from around the world competed in one of six 11-round Swiss tournaments to decide World Champions in six sections: both Open and Girls in three age groups U8, U10, U12.

Overall, **India** won the most medals, with 1 silver and 3 bronze. The **US** had two gold and one silver, and **Russia** won two gold and one bronze.

15 Canadians played. Going into the final round, two were in medal contention. **Nameer Isani** (U10) had 7.5/10, and a win would have put him in a multi-way tie for 2nd, though poor tie-breaks after a round 2 loss would probably have kept him off the podium. Instead, he drew and finished =5th-9th (9th on TB).

Anthony Atanasov also had 7.5/10 going into the last round, but had been playing on top boards after his 5.5/6 start and so had the second-best tie breaks in the U8 section. He also drew his last-round game — pushing for 130 moves! — to finish ½ a point off the podium in a tie for 5th-9th (5th on TB).

Atanasov, Anthony (1546)

Ansar, Aldiyar (1791)

A43

WCCC U8 (4), 22.10.2016

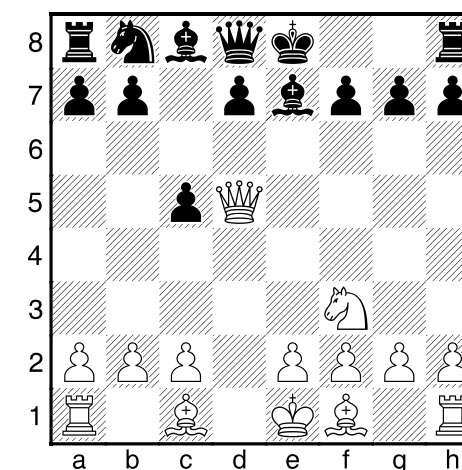
Notes by John Upper

Black equalizes easily after a bland opening by White, but the game produces an interesting middlegame material imbalance — ♖♗♗ vs ♕♕ — which White handles better than Black.

1.d4 ♗f6 2.♗f3 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♗c3

4.c4 going into a Benoni is normal, though White should be prepared for a Blumenfeld gambit with 4...b5

4...exd5 5.♗xd5 ♗xd5 6.♔xd5 ♕e7





7.e3

After this Black should be at least equal on all lines as he can play ...d5 with more space. More testing moves are:

7.♟f4! ♞c6 8.0-0-0 0-0

9.♟d6 (1-0, 29) [Landa,K \(2638\)–Simacek,P \(2485\) Czechia, 2013.](#)

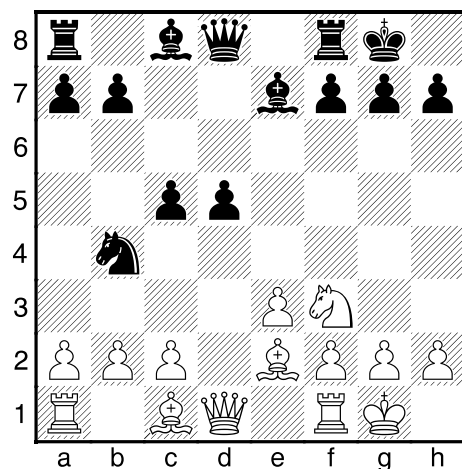
7.e4! 0-0 8.♟e2 d6 9.0-0

♞c6 10.c3 ♟e6 11.♞h5 h6
12.♞d1± (1-0, 36) [Karpov,A \(2740\)–Topalov,V \(2640\) Dos Hermanas, 1994.](#)

7...0-0 8.♟e2 ♞c6 9.0-0 ♞b4

9...d6 preparing ...♟e6 is another way to prepare ...d5, though White can change course and play 10.e4.

10.♞d1 d5=



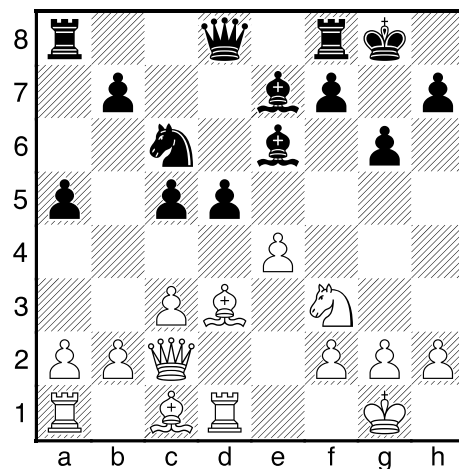
11.c3

At some point White will want to break out his DSB with c4 or e4, and could do so now. 11.c4=.

**11...♞c6 12.♞c2 ♟e6
13.♞d1 a5**

I'm not sure what this is supposed to do. 13...♞c8 looks more natural.

14.♟d3 g6 15.e4



15...d4!

15...dxe4 16.♟xe4 ♞c7 17.♟h6± or 17.♞g5±.

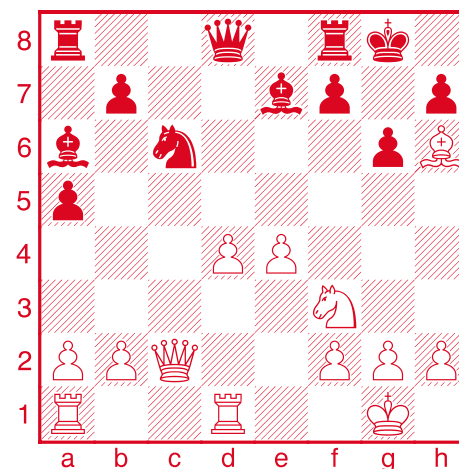
16.♟h6 c4!

16...♞e8 17.cxd4 cxd4 18.♟b5±
White has pressure on Black's d-pawn.

17.♟xc4

17.♟xf8 cxd3 18.♞xd3 ♟xf8
19.♞xd4 ♞xd4 20.cxd4 ♞b6̄
White's center looks nice, but it's not going anywhere.

17...♟xc4 18.cxd4 ♟a6



White would like to keep his d4-e4 center as long as possible, but he's going to be forced to advance the d-pawn soon, and doing so now is an improvement, kicking away the ♞ when it doesn't have a good choice of squares.

19.♟xf8

♞19.d5!:

a) 19...♞b8 20.d6 ♟f6 21.♟xf8 ♞xf8 22.e5 ♟g7±;

b) 19...♞e8 saves the ♞ but loses

the game 20.dxc6 ♞c7 21.♞c3! threatens mate and defends the ♞ to unpin the c6-pawn, 21...♟f8 22.♟xf8 ♞xf8 23.cxb7 with two extra pawns;

c) 19...♞b4 20.♞b3 ♟e2∞ makes an escape square on a6 for the ♞, (20...♞e8 21.a3 a4 22.♞c3± with a mate threat and attack on the ♞b4 (22.♞xa4? ♟c4-+ traps the ♞.)) 21.♟xf8 ♟xf8 22.♞d2∞ and at least Black has to give up the ♟ pair.

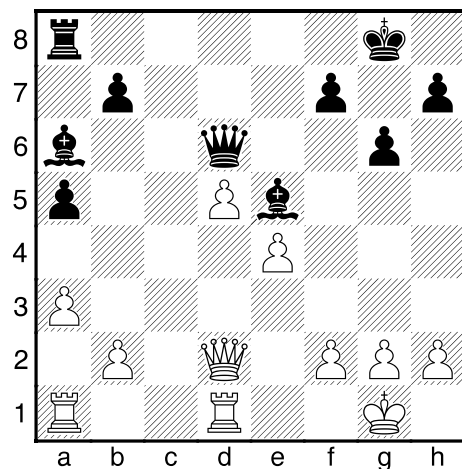
19...♟xf8 20.a3

20.d5 doesn't transpose to the previous note because after 20...♞b4 21.♞b3 a4! 22.♞c3 now that the ♟h6 has taken the exchange on f8 there is no mate threat on g7, so after (22.♞xa4?? ♟c4 as above, White's ♞ is trapped.) 22...♞c8!♞ Black either forks an exchange or gets his ♞ to c2 with an attack on f2 and an Octopus landing on d3.

20...♟g7 21.♞d2 ♞d6 22.d5 ♞e5 23.♞xe5 ♟xe5̄



Chess Canada Gnome



Diagonals vs Files

For the ♖-pair White has ♖♗ and one of those pawns is a protected passer. But White's ♖s are not active now since there's only one open file (which Black has covered) and not likely to be active anytime soon, since the only way to open another file is to expose his ♔ by pushing his kingside pawns. OTOH, Black's ♗'s are both active since there are open diagonals. Not surprisingly, computers prefer Black.

24.h3

Either pawn move has its disadvantages, since it restricts one ♗ while giving squares to the other; but I prefer 24.g3 which could make f2-f4 a tactical threat.

Anthony Atanasov

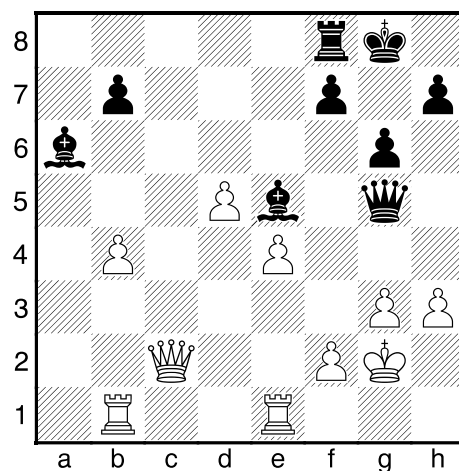
24...Re8!

The automatic 24...Rc8? is a mistake, since Black should not want to trade off one of White's redundant ♖s.

25.♖e1 ♖f8 26.♔c2 ♔f6 27.♖ab1 ♗f4

27...h5!? aiming for ...h4 then ...♗f4 is another way to harness the ♗s for attack.

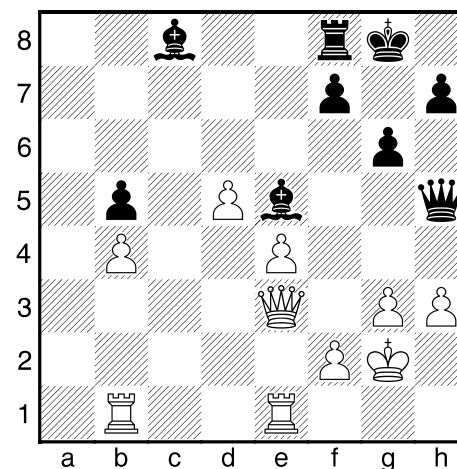
28.g3 ♗h6 29.♔g2 ♗g5 30.b4 axb4 31.axb4



31...b5?!

△31...♗b5 32.♗c5 ♗d7 and ...♗c8 will protect the b7-pawn while attacking the kingside.

32.♗c1 ♗h5 33.♗e3 ♗c8

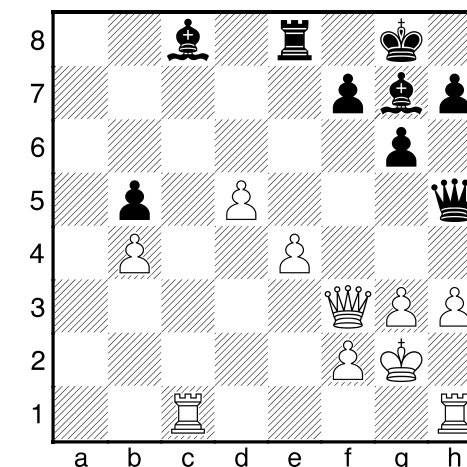


34.♖h1!

White plays safe!

34.g4 ♗h4 35.f4 is tempting, but there's no need to advance

34...Re8 35.♖bc1 ♗g7 36.♗f3



36...♗e5

Black is hoping for an attack with ...♗b7 and ...f5, but there's nothing wrong with the ♗ trade,

the pawns unless forced to, and delaying their advance leaves Black unsure of which diagonals to attack.

34.h4 ♗g4 the following shows one of Black's attacking chances:
35.♖bc1 ♗h3+
36.♔g1 ♗g4
37.♖c5? ♗d4!-+.



Chess Canada Gnome

36...♔xf3+ 37.♔xf3 f5 38.♖he1
fxe4+ 39.♖xe4 ♖f8+ 40.♖f4
(40.♔g2 ♘b7+) 40...♖d8+.

37.♖he1 ♘b7?!

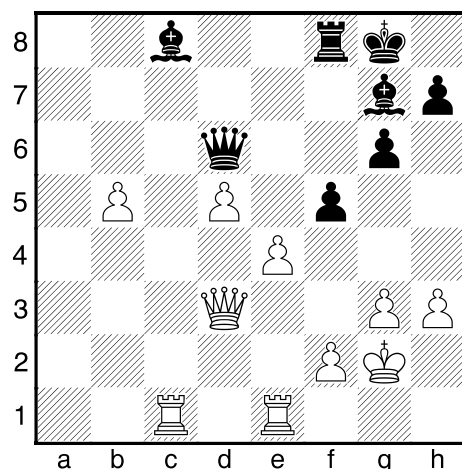
37...f5?? 38.exf5 ♔xe1 39.♖xe1
♖xe1 40.f6+-;

Better is **37...♘d7**, protecting b5.

38.♔d3 ♖f8

38...f5! 39.♔xb5 ♖e7∞.

39.♔xb5 ♘c8 40.♔d3 ♔d6
41.b5 f5

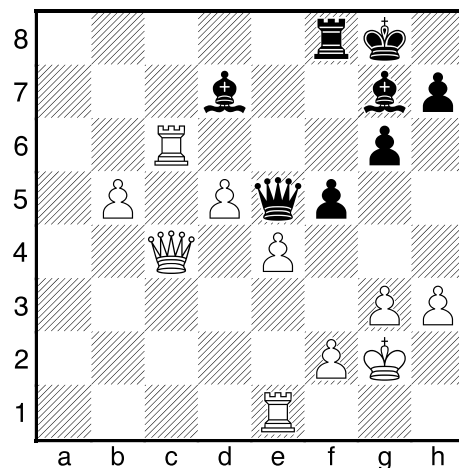


Black gets his break in, but it's
a different story with White's
passed b-pawn and access
along the c-file.

42.♖c6!

42.e5! ♘xe5 43.♖c6 ♔b8 44.d6+-

42...♔e5 43.♔c4 ♘d7



44.b6?

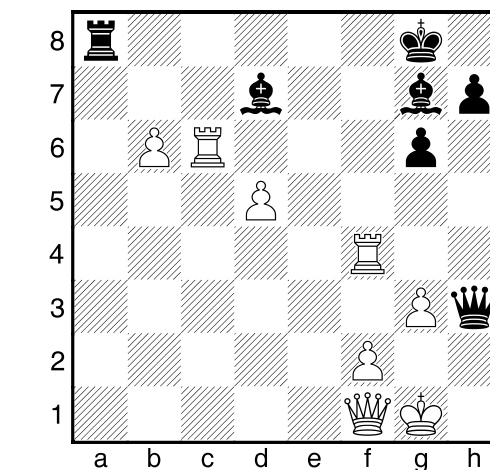
White tries to keep his kingside
pawns in their defensive lineup,
but here he misses his chance to
shut out Black's ♘s for good:

44.f4! ♔d4 (44...♔b2+ 45.♖e2+-)
45.♔xd4 ♘xd4 46.e5!+- Black
has no attack and White's pawns
will roll.

44...fxe4?!

44...f4! threatening ...fxg3 then
...♔h5, when g3-g4 loses to
...♘xg4. 45.g4 ♔g5!∞ and Black
has dangerous threats with
...♘xg4, or ...f3+ then ...♔h4.

45.♖xe4 ♔f5 46.♖f4 ♔xh3+
47.♔g1 ♖a8! 48.♔f1 ♖±



48...♔h5?

♞48...♔xf1+ 49.♔xf1 ♖b8
50.♖b4±.

49.b7!+- ♖b8 50.♔c1! ♘e5
50...♘h6 51.♖c8+-;
50...♖xb7 51.♖c8+ is mating.

51.♖c8+ ♔g7 52.♖h4
52.♔c5! aiming for f8 is more
precise, but White's cool move
wins too.

52...♔e2 53.♔h6+! ♔f6
54.♖f4+ ♘f5 55.♔f8+ ♔g5
56.♔e7+

1-0



FM Lefong Hua
earned his **first**
IM Norm in the

2016 **Autumn Invitational** at
the St.Louis Chess Club, Novem-
ber 17-22, 2016. Lefong started
with three draws, but finished
with 5/6 to tie atop the IM Norm
group with US FM Konstantin
Kavutskiy, each with 6.5/9.

This was Lefong's first IM
Norm after years of tournament
inactivity. He also gained an
amazing 49.4 FIDE rating points.

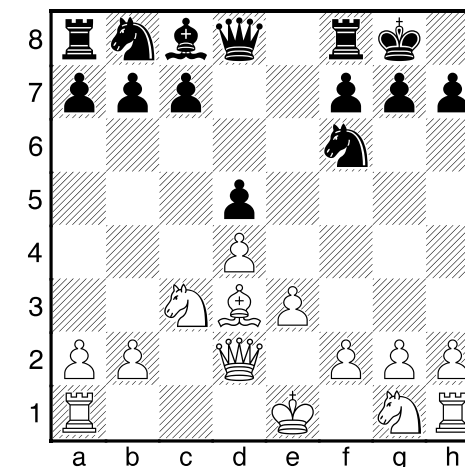
Hua, Lefong (2284)
Colas, Josh (2347)

E00

*CCSCSL Autumn Invitational St
Louis (9.9), 22.11.2016*

Notes by John Upper

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♘b4+ 3.♘d2
♘xd2+ 4.♔xd2 d5 5.♘c3
♘f6 6.e3 0-0 7.cxd5 exd5
8.♘d3





Chess Canada Gnome

8...♔e7

8...♘c6 9.♘ge2 ♘e7 10.♔c2 g6
11.h3 ♘f5 12.g4 ♘xd3 13.♔xd3
♘c8 14.0-0-0 ♘d6= (1-0, 38)

Wojtaszek,R (2723)–Vocaturu,D
(2597) Doha, 2015.

9.♘ge2 ♔d8

9...♘bd7 10.0-0 b6 11.♔ae1
♘b7 12.f3 c5 13.g4 ♔fd8 14.♘f4
♘f8 15.g5 ♘e8 16.h4∞ (1-0, 56)

Fressinet,L (2696)–Bischoff,K
(2547) Germany, 2012.

10.0-0 b6

10...♘bd7 11.♔ae1 ♘f8 12.f3
c5 13.dxc5 ♔xc5 14.♔c1 ♔b6
15.♘d4 ♘d7 16.♘ce2 ♔ac8
17.a3 ♔xc1 18.♔xc1 ♔c8 19.♔e1
♘e6 20.♘b1 g6 21.♘a2± (½-½,

49) Bischoff,K (2537)
–Tratar,M (2499)
Austria 2012.

11.♔fe1 ♘b7

12.f3 c5 13.♔ad1

♘c6 14.♘g3 g6

15.♔f2 ♔ac8

16.♘b1 ♔f8

17.♘ge2 ♔h6

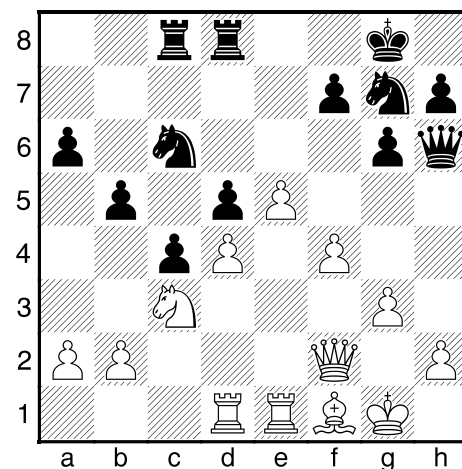
18.♘c1 ♘a6

19.♘d3 ♘xd3

20.♘xd3 c4

21.♘f1 a6 22.e4 b5 23.e5

♘h5 24.g3 ♘g7 25.f4±



A typical queenside vs central
strategy in the QG exchange.

25...b4 26.♘a4

26.♘xd5!? ♔xd5 27.♘xc4=.



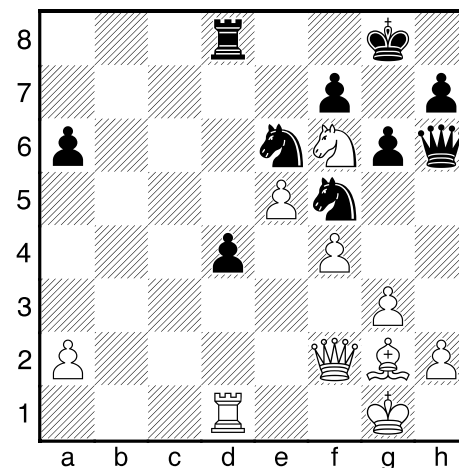
26...♘e6 27.♘g2 ♘e7

28.♔f1 c3 29.bxc3 bxc3

30.♔c1 ♔c4 31.♘xc3 ♔xd4

32.♔cd1 ♔xd1 33.♔xd1 d4

34.♘e4 ♘f5 35.♘f6+



35...♔h8!=

35...♔g7? 36.h4± and the ♔h6 is
running short of squares.

36.♘d5 ♔f8

37.♘e4 ♔c5

38.♘xf5 ♔xd5

39.♘xe6 fxe6

40.♔d3 ♔e4

41.♔d2 g5

42.fxg5 ♔g8

43.h4 ♔xe5

44.♔f2

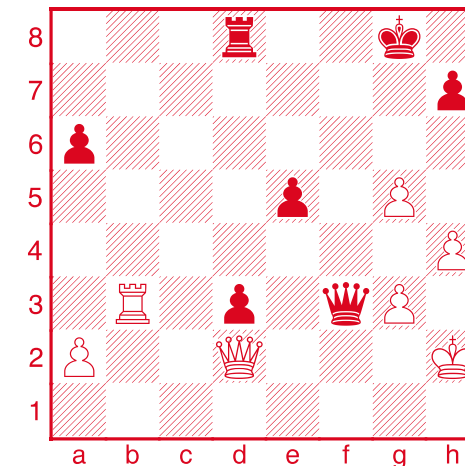
44.♔f3!=.

44...♔e4 45.♔d2 e5 46.♔b3

d3-+ 47.♔h2 ♔f3?

47...♔d5 48.g6 hxg6 49.♔g5

♔d6-+.



48.g6♞

Only move, White now has
significant counterplay.

48...♔f5

48...hxg6 49.♔g5=;

48...♔e2+ 49.♔xe2 dxe2

50.gxh7+ ♔xh7 51.♔e3 ♔d2

52.♔g1= ♔xa2 53.♔xe5

a5 54.♔f2 a4 (54...♔g6??

55.♔xe2+-) 55.♔a5!= (55.g4??

a3 56.♔a5 ♔a1 57.♔xe2 a2

58.♔f2 ♔h1-+) 55...a3 56.♔a7+ 57.

(56.g4 ♔a1-+ as above.)

56...♔g6 57.♔a6+ ♔f5 58.h5

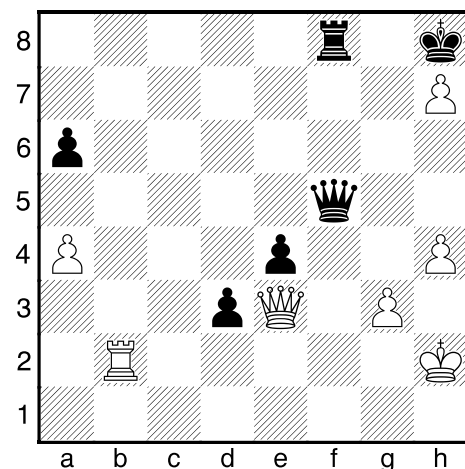
Five Brah Man Hug

Cristian Chirilia, Aman Hambleton, Eric Hansen,
Lefong Hua, and Yasser Seirawan at the St.Louis CC.



♖a1 59.♔xe2 a2 60.h6 ♖h1
61.h7=.

49.gxh7+ ♔h8 50.♖b7 ♖c8
51.♔e3 ♖f8 52.♖b2 e4 53.a4



53... ♔e5
53... ♖f3!-+.

54.♖f2 ♖xf2+ 55.♔xf2
♔xh7 56.♖f7+ ♔h6
57.♔h3 d2 58.g4 d1♔
59.g5+ ♖xg5 60.hxg5+
♔xg5 61.♖g7+ ♔f4
62.♖h6+ ♔e5 63.♖g5+
♔d6??

Played very quickly.

64.♔d8+

So was this.

1-0

*"It was really dirty.
It was typical Lefong dirt.
I feel bad. I really feel bad." **

- FM Lefong Hua

IM **Aman Hambleton** played in the parallel GM Norm event, and scored +2 =3 -3 including losses to winners Kannappan and Akshat Chandra, who earned his final GM norm

Links

Aman and Lefong created a three-part Vlog during the event, which you can see here:

Vlog 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOVugp4WeBc&t>

Vlog 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgNYH72q0cl&t>

Vlog 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSJ-P_dhhaE&t



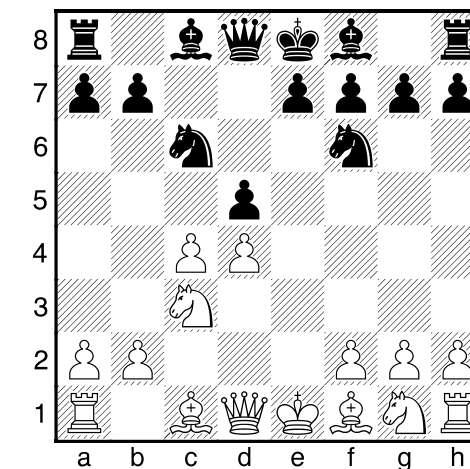
The Saint Louis Chess Club is not the only one organizing Norm tournaments in the US. The **Charlotte Chess Centre** in North Carolina does so too. **FM Michael Kleinman** played this fine attacking game in one...

Kleinman, Michael (2289)
Vigorito, David (2370)
E57

2017 CCCSA GM/IM Norm Invitational B (2), 30.03.2017
Notes by John Upper

A Caro-Kann Panov-Botvinnik attack turns into a standard IQP position where White gets a very strong, and very thematic, sacrificial attack on the light squares.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5
3.exd5 cxd5
4.c4 ♘f6 5.♘c3
♘c6



6.♘g5

6.♘f3 ♘g4 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♖b3 is the start of the well-worn "Endgame Variation", which continues 8...♘xf3 9.gxf3 e6 10.♖xb7 ♘xd4 11.♘b5+ ♘xb5 12.♖c6+ ♔e7 and Black is reckoned to be OK. ... though here's a crazy recent result between very strong players as a reminder to White players to stay alert: 13.♖c5+ ♔e8 14.♖xb5+ ♖d7 15.♘xd5 exd5 16.♖b3 ♘d6 17.0-0 ♖b8 18.♖e3+ ♔f8 19.♖d1?? ♖h3 White resigned since the only way to stop the mate (f4) loses the ♖d1 to ...♘g4+; [Riazantsev,A \(2671\)-Jakovenko,D \(2709\)](#) Sharjah, 2017.

6...dxc4 7.♘xc4



7.d5 is the other main option for White: 7...♘e5 8.♙d4 h6!∞.

7...h6!

It's risky to take the d-pawn 7...♙xd4 8.♙xd4 ♘xd4 9.0-0 e5 10.f4 ♘g4 11.♘f3 ♘xf3 12.gxf3∞ When White has a significant lead in development; e.g. [Mamedyarov,S \(2736\)–Sethuraman,S \(2640\)](#) Baku, 2015 (1-0, 41).

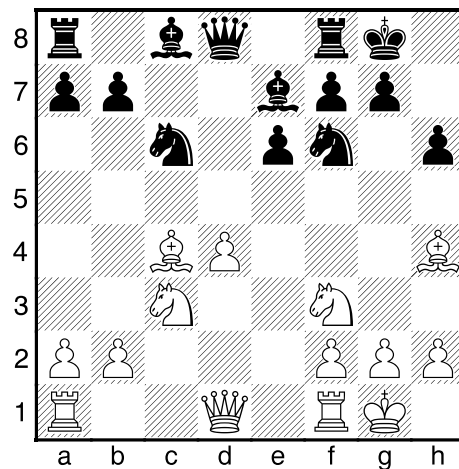
8.♘h4

8.♘e3 is a much less dynamic way of using the IQP, 8...e6 9.♘f3 ♘d6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♙d2 ♘e7! 12.♖ad1 a6 13.♘d3 ♘f5 14.♘f4= (½-½, 30) [Kamsky,G \(2740\)–Eljanov,P \(2678\)](#) Moscow, 2013.

8...e6

Safer than ...♙xd4, as at move 7.

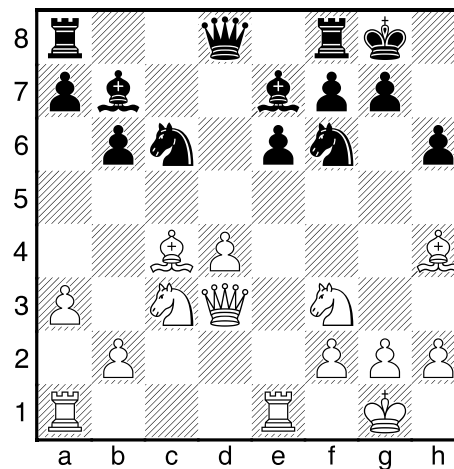
9.♘f3 ♘e7 10.0-0 0-0



11.a3!

11.♖c1 b6 12.♘d3 ♘b7 13.♘b1 ♖c8 14.♖e1 ♖e8 15.a3 ♘h5 16.♙c2 ♘xh4 17.♙h7+? (17. d5□∞) 17...♙f8 18.d5 ♘g5?? (18...♘d4! 19.♘xd4 ♘xf2+□ 20.♙xf2 ♙h4+-+) 19.♖cd1□+- ♙f6 20.d6 g6 21.♘xg5 ♖cd8 (21...hxxg5 22.♘e4+-) 22.♘xe6+!+- 1-0 [Naiditsch,A \(2674\)–Eljanov,P \(2761\)](#) Sibenik, 2010.

11...b6 12.♙d3 ♘b7 13.♖fe1



A nearly standard IQP position, which can also arise out of an e3-Nimzo. ...h6 (rather than ...g6 to defend a battery along the b1-h7 diagonal) weakens Black's kingside light squares, which White exploits nicely.

13...♖c8

13...♘h5 14.♘g3 ♘xg3 15.hxxg3 ♘f6 16.d5 exd5 17.♘xd5 ♘xb2?! (17...♙h8 (1-0, 82) [Kobalia,M](#)

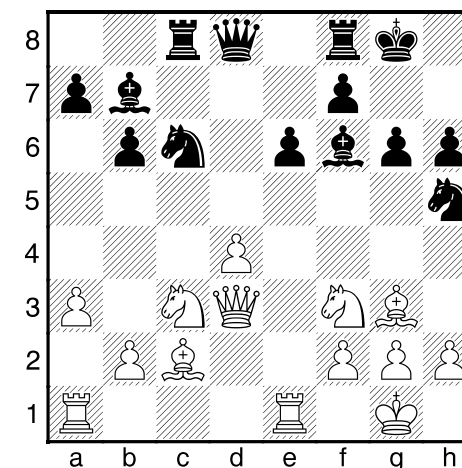
(2666)–[Riazantsev,A](#) (2689)

Moscow, 2011.) 18.♖ad1 ♘a5? 19.♘e7+! ♙h8 20.♙f5□+- ♙xd1 (20...♙c7 21.♘g5!+-) 21.♖xd1 ♘xf3 22.♘d3 1-0 [Gulko,B \(2533\)–Krush,I \(2489\)](#) Rockville, 2013.

14.♘b3 ♘h5! 15.♘g3

15.♘xe7 ♘xe7 16.g3 (16.♖ad1? ♘f4 17.♙e3 ♘xg2! 18.♙xg2 ♘f5 19.♙f4 ♘h4+-+) 16...♘f6 17.♖ad1 ♘ed5±.

15...♘f6 16.♘c2 g6



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Chess Canada
Gnome



17. ♖xe6!∞

This works only because ...h6 has weakened g6.

17... ♖xg3!

One of only two moves which don't immediately lose.

Not **17... fxe6??** 18. ♖xg6+ ♖g7 19. ♖e5!+- Δ ♖xe5 20. ♖h7+ ♖f7 21. ♖g6+ ♖e7 22. dxe5+-;

17... ♖xd4 is the other move, with non-losing complications:

a) 18. ♖xf6?! ♖xc2□ 19. ♖d6 (19. ♖xg6+ looks tempting, but Black is better after 19... fxg6 20. ♖xg6+ ♖g7 21. ♖xc2 ♖xf3 22. gxf3 ♖xf3+) 19... ♖xa1 20. ♖xd8 ♖fxd8+;

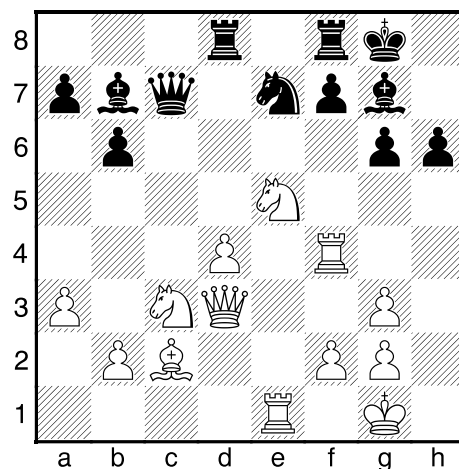
b) 18. ♖d6 ♖xf3+ 19. gxf3 ♖e8!∞;

c) 18. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 19. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 20. ♖e7= ♖xc3 21. bxc3 ♖xc3 22. ♖xg6=.

18. hxg3 ♖g7 19. ♖e4 ♖e7 20. ♖f4

Stopping ...♖f5, which would now lose to ♖xf5.

20... ♖c7 21. ♖e1 ♖cd8 22. ♖e5



22... ♖c6?

22... ♖xe5 23. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 24. dxe5 ♖xd3 25. ♖xd3 and White is up a safe pawn.

22... ♖d5 23. ♖xd5 (23. ♖h4 ♖xc3) 23... ♖xd5±.

23. ♖c4±

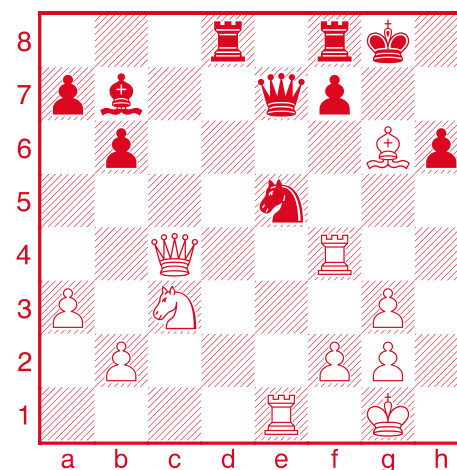
Good, but not nearly the best.

23. ♖xf7!!+- this second strike on the light squares would end the game: 23... ♖xf7 (23... ♖xd4 24. ♖xg6+- is mating.) 24. ♖b3 ♖e5 25. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 (25... ♖xe5 26. ♖xg6+-) 26. ♖xg6+- with total ownership of the light squares.

23... ♖e7

Pinning the ♖ to e1.

24. ♖xg6! ♖xe5 25. dxe5 ♖xe5



26. ♖xe5??

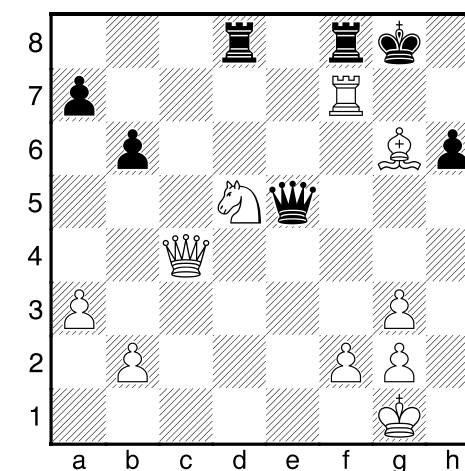
Giving away most of White's advantage.

26. ♖xf7+! ♖h8 (26... ♖xf7? 27. ♖xe5+-; 26... ♖xf7 27. ♖xe5 ♖xc4 28. ♖xc4 and White is up two pawns with a much safer ♖.) 27. ♖e2 ♖xf7 28. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 29. ♖xe5+- also with an extra two pawns and huge initiative.

26. ♖xf7!! putting yet a third piece *en prise* to the ♖ would have been a worthy finish: 26... ♖xc4 27. ♖exe7 ♖fe8 (27... ♖xf7 28. ♖xf7+ ♖f8

29. ♖xb7+-) 28. ♖g7+ ♖h8 29. ♖h7+ ♖g8 30. ♖eg7+ ♖f8 31. ♖xb7+-.

26... ♖xe5 27. ♖xf7 ♖d5□ 28. ♖xd5



28... ♖xd5??

28... ♖xf7□ 29. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7± and there are no particularly useful discovered checks, though White's extra pawns and protected ♖ give him the easier game.

29. ♖c7!+- ♖fe8 30. ♖g7+ ♖f8 31. ♖h7

1-0

Carnival

Tournoi d'échecs du Carnaval 2017 February 17-19, 2017

137 players competed in the 2017 Carnaval tournament in Quebec City.

The top section featured 2 GMs, 1 IM, and 4 FMs. GMs **Alexandre Le Siège** and **Bator Sambuev** drew each other and won all their other games to finish as cowinners and take home \$1500 each. **Steve Bolduc** and **Qiuyu Huang** tied for 3rd with 4/5 (\$550 each).

The other titled players all finished out of the money: IM **Thanh Nha Duong** (3½), and the FMs — **Olivier-Kenta Chiku-Ratte**, **Joe Horton** (lost to Le Siège in rd.5), **Robert Hamilton**, and **Shawn Rodrigue-Lemieux** (lost to Le Siège in rd.3) — each finished with 3.

Special mention to **Mathieu Poulin**, who scored 3.5/5, played no one who finished outside the top 12, beat IM Duong and FM Chiku-Ratte, earned a TPR of 2442, lost only to cowinner Sambuev in the final round... but *still* had to share the U2200

prize. **Mathieu J.-Constantin** was the only player at Carnaval to win a section outright: 4.5/5 to take the U2000 and \$1500 first prize.

Chess Canada features two games annotated by GM Bator Sambuev: his round 4 draw with GM Alexandre Le Siège and his final round must-win game.

Tournoi du Carnaval
137 players in the heart of a Quebec winter.



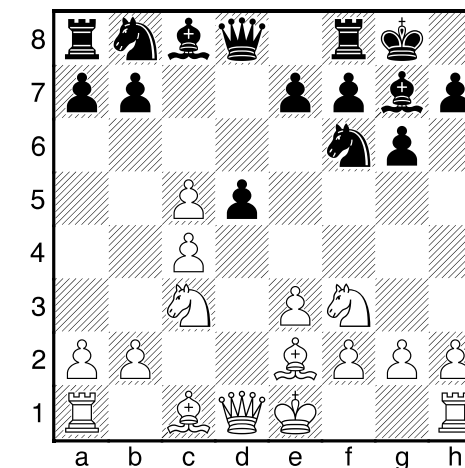
Notes by GM Bator Sambuev
Sambuev, Bator (2605)
Le Siège, Alexandre (2567)

D94
Carnival Quebec (4), 19.02.2017

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e3
Trying to play a Zukertort.

3...g6
But now I get Grunfeld or, if you want, Catalan reversed.

4.c4 ♖g7 5.♘c3 0-0 6.♖e2 c5 7.dxc5



7.0-0 leads to Tarrasch reversed, another opening in my repertoire.





7...dxc4

7...♖a5 is the main line. I think White's extra move (♙e2) should tell in some circumstances. For example: 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♙xd5 ♙xc3+ 10.♙d2 ♖d8 11.♙xd8+!? ♙xd8 12.♙xc3 and compared to the same line in the Catalan, White already may castle. I think in such a position this should be important.

8.♙xd8 ♖xd8 9.♙xc4

On the other hand, now I lose my extra tempo, and the position is equal.

9...♘bd7 10.c6 bxc6 11.♙d2

11.0-0 would be more accurate, but I didn't want to evacuate my king from the centre too early.

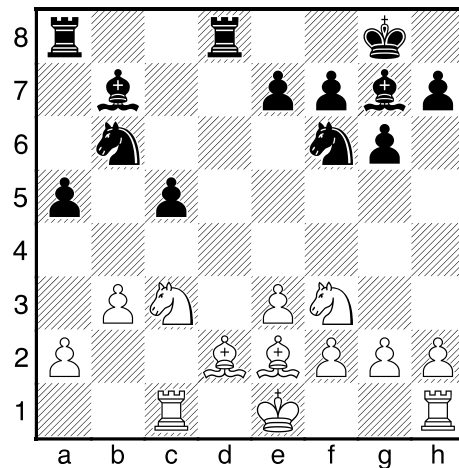
11...♘b6

11...♘g4 now could be unpleasant.

12.♙e2 c5 13.♖c1

Following a wrong plan. After 13.0-0 ♙b7 14.♖fd1 I have a chance to trade some pieces and then attack Black's weak pawns.

13...♙b7 14.b3 a5



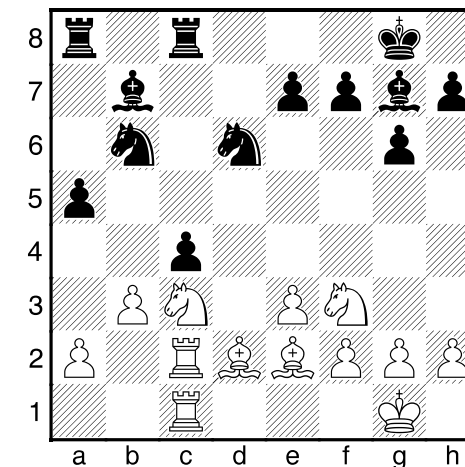
15.♙b5

This is the point of my plan. Here I already was optimistic. If I manage to complete development, Black's pawns on a5 and c5 will become targets. But, after some thinking, Alexandre found very strong regrouping.

15...♖dc8 16.0-0 ♘e8!

16...c4 allows Black to get rid of the c-pawn, but not the a-pawn.

17.♙e2 ♘d6 18.♖c2 c4 19.♖fc1



It looks like it's going to be another boring grandmaster draw. But suddenly it becomes very sharp.

19...♘d5!?

Not the best move — 19...a4 — but eventually we get a very interesting study-like ending.

20.♘xd5

20.♘a4 ♘b4 (20...c3 also leads to a draw, but requires some accuracy: 21.♙xc3 ♙xc3 22.♘xc3 ♘b4 23.♖b2 ♙xf3 24.gxf3 ♖c7! 25.a3 ♖ac8!= 26.♖d1 ♖xc3 27.axb4

GM Alexandre Le Siège





axb4 28.♖d4=) 21.♙xb4 cxb3!
22.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 23.♖xc8+ ♘xc8
24.axb3 axb4 Black is slightly
better due to the bishop pair, but
most likely it's a draw. I found
one trick that Alexandre missed
playing 19... ♘d5. Unfortunately
for me I missed another
intermediate move that led me to
lost position.

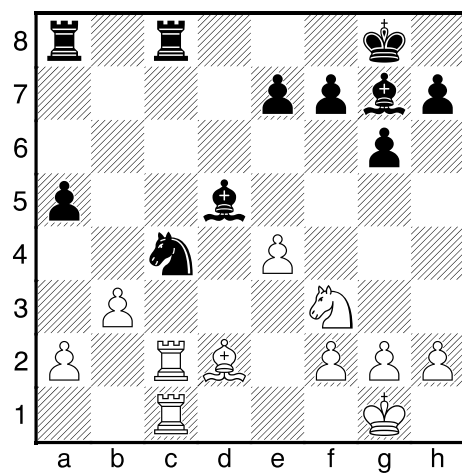
20...♙xd5 21.♙xc4?

After 21.♘d4 it's still equal. But I
realized my mistake too late.

21...♘xc4

Here Alexandre noticed that on
21...♙e4? 22.♙xf7+! wins! But...

22.e4



22...♙b2!

22...♙xe4? 23.♖xc4 ♖xc4

24.♖xc4 Black should be OK due
to the bishop pair, but a pawn is
a pawn.

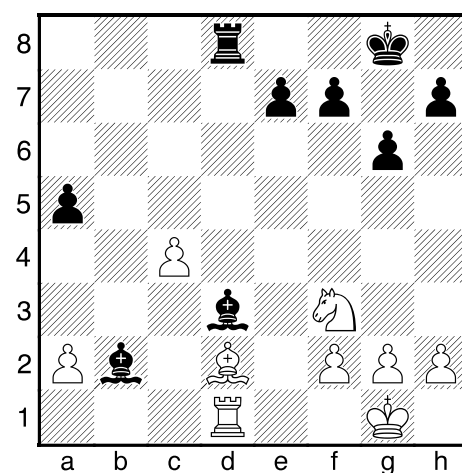
23.♖d1

editor – 23.bxc4? ♙xc1 24.exd5
♙xd2 25.♘xd2 ♖ab8-+ White's
pawns aren't going anywhere.

23...♙xe4 24.♖xc4 ♖xc4 25.bxc4 ♖d8!

This is the problem. This pin
should secure Black some
material advantage.

26.♙f1 ♙d3+ 27.♙g1



White cannot do anything else.

27...♙e4

Black tries to win the c-pawn
while keeping a-pawns on the
board. That would be deadly for

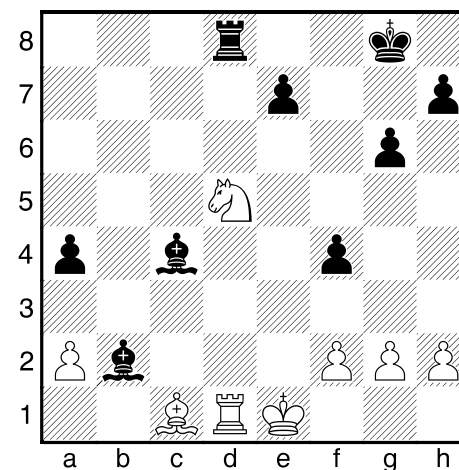
White.

27...♙xc4 28.♖b1 ♙f6 29.♙xa5
with drawing chances.

28.♙f1 a4 29.♘e1 ♙b7 30.♘c2 ♙a6 31.♘e3 f5

The last few moves were more-
or-less logical. I understood
that passive defence most likely
leads to a loss and prepared one
interesting trap.

32.♙e1 f4 33.♘d5 ♙xc4 34.♙c1!



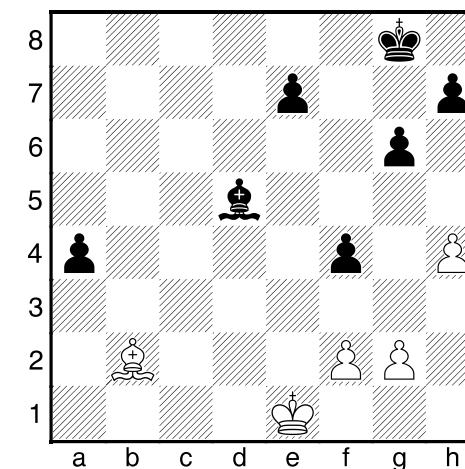
34...♖xd5

It looks like my last move came
as surprise for Alexandre.
Black's position is still winning
after: 34...♖b8 but what if Black
simply wins second pawn?

35.♖xd5 ♙xd5 36.♙xb2 ♙xa2

A key factor is that a1 is the
wrong corner for Black's ♙. My
task is to trade as many pawns
as possible. So...

37.h4! ♙d5



38.♙f1!!

The whole point. When I
calculated 32.♙e1 with this
ending I understood, that 38.g3
fxg3 39.fxg3 might be dangerous
because Black may attack g3.
The problem is that after losing
my g-pawn (say, Black trades it
for his e-pawn) I probably lose
my h-pawn. But if there is only
one pawn on the kingside then
I can move my king toward the
a1 corner and give up my bishop
for the g-pawn. That's why I

think it's so important to trade h-pawns.

38...♔f7

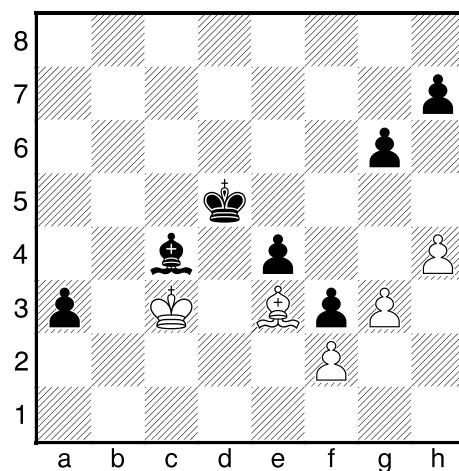
After 38...h6 39.♙c1 g5 40.hxg5 hxg5 41.g3 fxg3 (41...e5 42.♙b2) 42.fxg3 g4 Black can't even attack g3.

39.♙e5 f3 40.g3

Now it's elementary because e-pawn is absolutely harmless.

40...♔e6 41.♙b2 ♙c4+

**42.♔e1 ♔d5 43.♔d2 e5
44.♔c3 e4 45.♙c1 a3
46.♙e3**



The remaining moves don't require any comment.

**46...♔c6 47.♙c1 ♔b5
48.♙e3 ♔a4 49.♙c1
♙d3 50.♙e3 ♙e2
51.♙c1 a2 52.♔b2
♙c4 53.♙e3 ♙e6
54.♙d4 ♔b4 55.♙e3
♙b3 56.♙d4 ♔c4
57.♙e3 ♔d3 58.♙c5**

From my point of view, a very instructive ending.

1/2-1/2

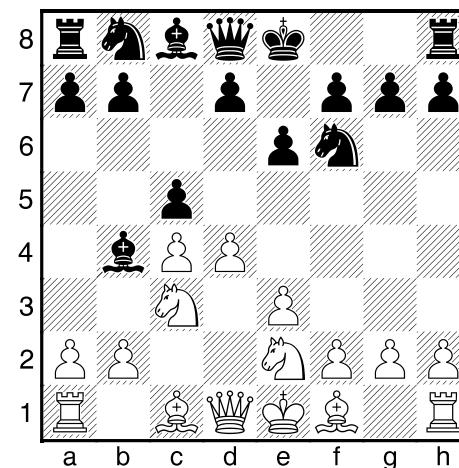
GM Bator Sambuev
Enjoying the view from the top.

**Notes by
GM Bator Sambuev
Poulin, Mathieu (2165)
Sambuev, Bator (2584)
E42**

Carnival Quebec (5), 19.02.2017

It was must-win game because it was obvious that LeSiège should win with white pieces.

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3
♙b4 4.e3 c5 5.♘ge2**



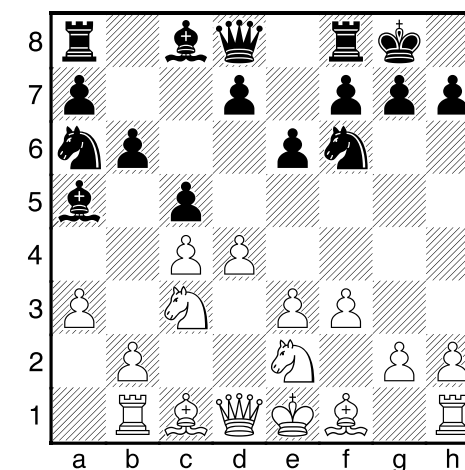
5...b6

Usually I play here 5...cxd4 6.exd4 d5 (6...0-0 7.a3 ♙e7 is also an option.) 7.a3 ♙e7 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♘xd5 exd5, but it's not a position for must-win game. So I recalled one interesting line that I used to play many years ago.

6.a3 ♙a5 7.♖b1 ♘a6

Black's way of development looks weird but it makes sense. 5.♘ge2 has only one idea: to avoid doubling of pawns. If I simply don't take the knight then I have some lead in development.

8.f3 0-0



9.e4

9.d5 is the most logical move – it's better to keep centre closed. It's interesting that I played this position as White against Anton Kovalyov: 9...d6 10.♔f2 ♖b8 11.e4 exd5 12.exd5 ♙f5 13.♖a1 ♘c7 14.♘g3 ♙g6 15.h4 ♙xc3 16.bxc3 h5 and now 17.a4 would have secured White comfortable advantage. The actual game continued 17.♙g5 b5↗



**Chess Canada
Gnome**

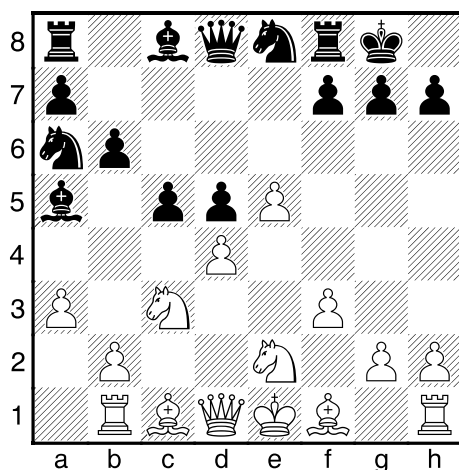


Sambuev,B (2491)–Kovalyov,A (2557) Quebec Open, 2009 (½-½, 81).

9...d5

The only way to exploit and advantage in development is to attack. And you need open files for this.

10.cxd5 exd5 11.e5 ♘e8



12.♘g3

Formally, a novelty. 12.♔f2 ♘ec7 13.♘g3 f6 14.exf6 ♔xf6 (0-1, 31) Granda Zuniga,J (2599)–Ibarra Jerez,J (2496)

Barcelona, 2008. That's approximately what I was intending to do.

12...♘ec7 13.♙e3 f5

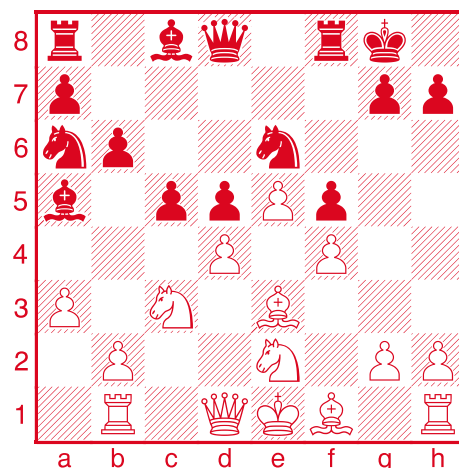
But now I changed my mind. 13...

f6 still more logical and stronger.

14.f4 ♘e6 15.♘ge2

The text move has a clear idea: White is three moves from significant advantage (g3, ♙g2, 0-0).

But Black's reply shows that it is a serious mistake. White should complete development even at the cost of a pawn: 15.♙b5 cxd4 16.♙xd4 ♙xc3+ 17.bxc3 ♘xf4 18.0-0 ♘g6 with good compensation.



15...♙b8!!

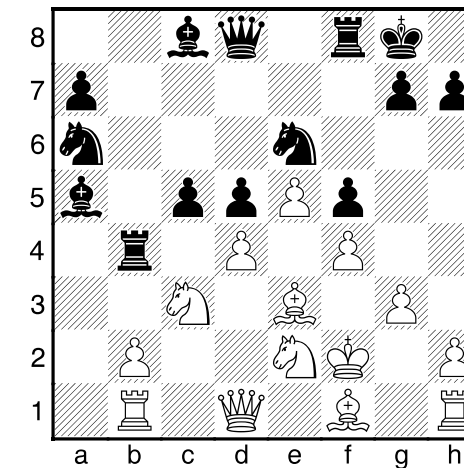
The winning move! I'm kidding, of course. Black doesn't win, but it allows me to reach the main goal: to blow up the centre!

It took more than 20 minutes to find this move. After considering all the "normal" moves and being not satisfied by the results I concentrated on the main goal: how to put more pressure on d4. I can switch the Queen or Bishop via b6, but it's still not enough. Eventually I found another piece! I think from practical point of view it's the best move, 'cause it makes White calculate a lot and to solve difficult problems.

16.g3 b5 17.♔f2?

And White immediately makes a mistake. After 17.♙g2 b4 18.axb4 ♔xb4 there is no way to hold the centre: 19.♙xd5 (19.0-0? cxd4 20.♘xd4 ♔xd4 21.♙xd4 ♘xd4) 19...cxd4 20.♙xe6+ (20.♘xd4 ♔xd5 21.♘xd5 ♔xd4+ and probably a draw.) 20...♙xe6 21.♘xd4 ♙c4 22.♔f2 (22.♘c6? ♔a8-) 22...♙b6 the position is very complicated.

17...b4 18.axb4 ♔xb4



19.♙g2??

And now the decisive mistake.

editor – 19.dxc5! is the saving move, because 19...d4 does not win a piece after 20.♘xd4 ♘xd4 21.♘a2! and the ♔b4 has no safe square.

Instead of ...d4, Black should try 19...♘axc5 20.♘xd5 (20.♔xd5?? ♘e4+! 21.♔g2 ♘xc3 22.♔xd8 ♙b7+-+ Black will be up a piece with both White's ♔s hanging.) 20...♘e4+ 21.♔g1 ♔ Black is still down a pawn, but White's development is woeful.

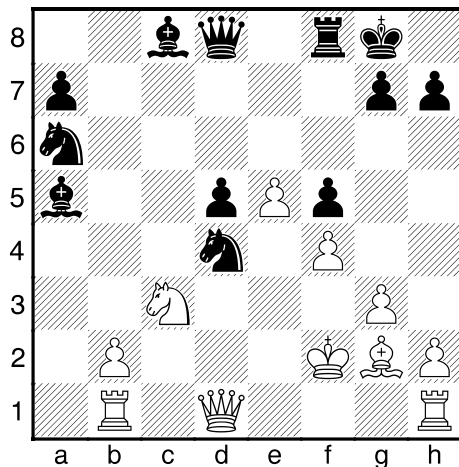
19...cxd4 20.♘xd4 ♔xd4 21.♙xd4 ♘xd4

15... Rb8!!

The winning move!
I'm kidding, of course.

...but





The rest is simple.

22. Nxd5

22. Qxd4? Bb6-+ of course.

22... Re6 23. b4 Bb6 24. Ne3
 Nc7 25. Qd3 Rf7 26. Rhd1
 Rd7 27. Qf1 Ndb5 28. Qxd7
 Bxd7

For some reason my opponent made another several moves, but let's say he resigned here.

0-1

**Western Chess & Go Club
 Exec & Open Section
 Champion UofT**

Tony Huang, Matt Blake,
 Paul Scala, Zehn Nassir, Mike
 Ivanov, Christopher Knox,
 Lloyd Mai, Enoch Lam.

2017 CUCC



The Canadian University Chess Championship was hosted by the Western Chess & Co Club January 14-17, 2017. It was a five-round four-player team swiss in two sections. 8 teams from 7 universities competed in the top section, and the reserves section had 16 teams from 8 universities for a total of 99 players.

The **University of Toronto A** team: **Mike Ivanov, Lloyd Mai, Christopher Knox, Zehn Nassir** (avg. rating 2307) won the Championship section with a perfect 5/5, powered by **Chris-**

topher Knox with a perfect 5/5 on board 3. **McGill** edged out the combined **Ottawa/Carleton U** team for second on tie-break.

Joey Qin had an outstanding performance as top board for Waterloo. Since starting university in 2015 Joey has played OTB chess rarely, but his results seem to have improved:

- won TORO 2015 with at TPR of **2658** (including a win over GM Sambuev),
- won an RA summer pick-up with 3/3 and TPR of **2655**,
- 4/5 and TPR of **2520** at the 2015 CUCC.

At the 2017 CUCC he scored 4.5/5 on Waterloo's top board for a tournament high **2564** TPR.



Chess Canada presents Joey Qin's notes to his final round game against McGill board 1, FM Michael Kleinman.

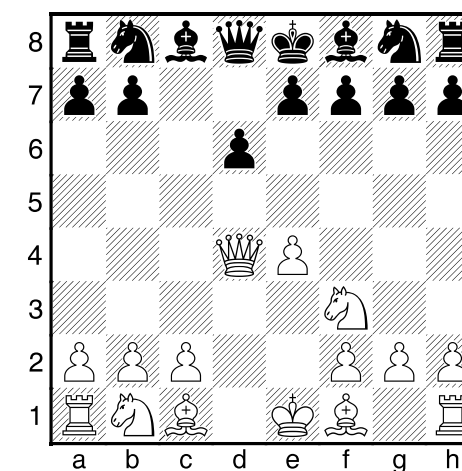
**Notes by Joey Qin
 Kleinman, Michael
 (2350)**

Qin, Joey (2481)

B53

2017 CUCC Ottawa (5.2),
 14.01.2017

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4
 4. Qxd4



4... a6

Allowing White to construct a Maroczy but planning to take advantage of the fact that White will not have the ideal piece positioning.

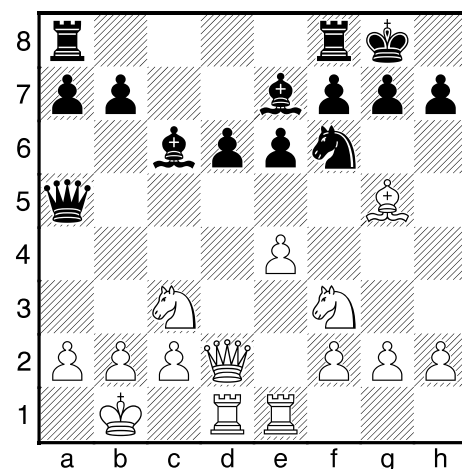


Chess Canada Gnome

4...♘c6 5.♙b5 ♘d7 6.♙xc6 ♙xc6
7.♘c3 ♘f6 8.♙g5 e6 9.0-0-0
♙e7 10.♖he1 0-0 11.♔b1 it's not
easy for Black to find good play.
He will constantly have to worry
about the d6-pawn.

editor – this position has been
played hundreds of times, with
White scoring decently. I have
included two games where
Tactical Giants lost as Black:
11...♙a5 12.♙d2

Analysis Diagram:



a) 12...♖fd8 13.♘d4 ♔h8 14.f4
h6 15.h4! ♖ac8 16.g4! ♘xe4? the
young Tal doesn't withstand the
pressure, and meets an in-form
Lutikov. (16...♙g8 17.♙xf6 ♙xf6
18.g5 with initiative.) 17.♖xe4!
hxg5 18.♘xc6 ♖xc6 19.hxg5+-
♙g8 20.♖h1 ♙xg5 21.fxg5 d5

22.♖d4 e5 23.g6?? (23.♙h2+-)
23...♖xg6 (23...exd4+-) 24.♘xd5
♖xd5 25.♙xa5 1-0 **Lutikov,A-
Tal,M** Riga, 1955.

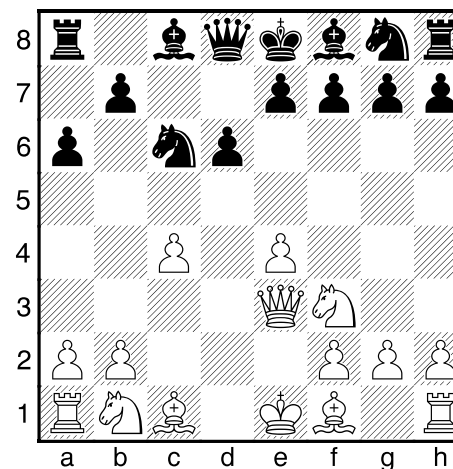
b) 12...♙a6 13.♘d4 b5 14.f3
♖fc8 15.g4 ♙e8 16.♘ce2 ♖c4
17.b3 ♖c7 18.♘g3 ♖ac8 19.♖c1
♖c3 (19...h6! 20.♙xh6 gxh6
21.♙xh6 ♘h7 22.♘h5 ♙f8) 20.♘h5!
b4? 21.♘xg7!+- ♙a3
22.♘xe8! (22.♘df5!!) 22...♖8c5
23.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 24.♙xf6 ♖a5
25.♙g5+ ♖xg5 26.♙xg5

White has a ♖♙♘♙ for the
♙. 26...♖c5 27.♙d8 ♔f8
(27...♖c8 28.♙f6 ♖c5 29.♖e2 ♖a5
30.c4+-) 28.♖e2! ♔e8 29.♙f6
1-0 **Zhigalko,S (2656)-Shirov,A
(2709)** Jurmala, 2013.

c) 12...♙b6 has also been
played, and might be best.

5.c4 ♘c6 6.♙e3

e3 seems like a strange position
for the queen but White will
develop via b3 and ♙b2.



6...g6 7.h3

Stopping ...♙g4 and ...♘g4
ideas.

**7...♙g7 8.♙e2 ♘f6 9.0-0 0-0
10.♘c3**

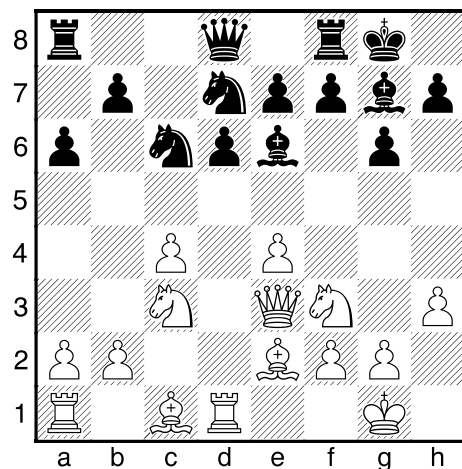
10.♖d1 is the main move,
threatening e5 and forcing Black
to make an early decision on
how to develop his pieces, and
it is what Michael played two
months later in the chess.com
PRO League: 10...♘d7 11.♘c3
♘c5 12.♖b1 a5 13.b3 **Kleinman -
Pichot (2556)**, 2017 (0-1, 55)

10...♙e6 11.♖d1 ♘d7



Joey Qin

*Invite him to a Norm event.
I dare you.*



With possible ideas of ... $\text{N}e5$, ... $\text{N}c5$, and ... $\text{Q}b6$. Black's main problem is the lack of space so trading off pieces would be good for him.

12.b3

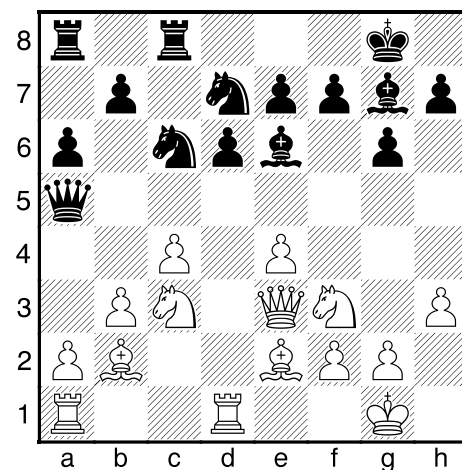
12. $\text{R}b1$ might have been stronger — getting off the a1-h8 diagonal and planning an immediate b4 to seize initiative on the queenside. 12... $\text{R}c8$ 13.b4 $\text{Q}xc4$! Black needs to find this move otherwise White will have a lot of binding pressure. 14. $\text{Q}xc4$ $\text{N}ce5$ 15. $\text{N}xe5$ (15. $\text{Q}xf7+$ $\text{N}xf7$ 16. $\text{N}d5$ e6 17. $\text{N}f4$ $\text{R}e8$) 15... $\text{Q}xe5$ 16. $\text{Q}d3$ $\text{N}b6$ 17. $\text{Q}xf7+$ $\text{R}xf7$ 18. $\text{N}d5$ e6 19. $\text{N}xb6$ $\text{Q}xb6$ 20. $\text{Q}e3$ $\text{Q}b5$ =.

12... $\text{Q}a5$

I considered trading off queens to relieve some pressure, but the knight on b6 would be awkwardly placed and need to be relocated. ... $\text{Q}a5$ also seemed to lead to more complex positions and chances for both sides. 12... $\text{Q}b6$ 13. $\text{Q}xb6$ $\text{N}xb6$ 14. $\text{Q}d2$ =.

13. $\text{Q}b2$ $\text{R}fc8$

Preparing for ...b5 ideas.



14. $\text{N}a4$

Kleinman wanted to get out of the annoying pin and trade off the important g7 bishop in hopes of a possible future kingside attack. However, after the trade, Black obtains a comfortable position where he can utilize the dark squares.

14. $\text{R}ab1$ b5 15. $\text{N}d5$ $\text{Q}xb2$ 16. $\text{R}xb2$ bxc4 17. $\text{Q}xc4$ $\text{Q}xd5$ 18. $\text{Q}xd5$ e6 19. $\text{Q}c4$ ±.

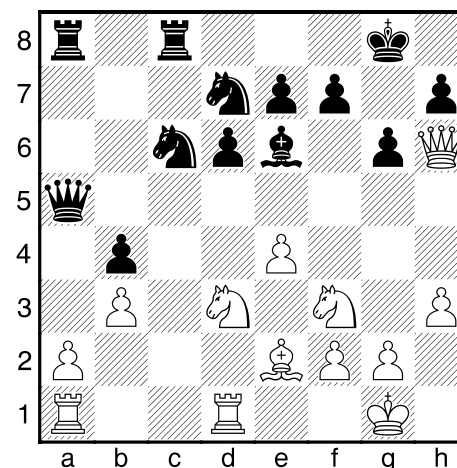
14... $\text{Q}xb2$ 15. $\text{N}xb2$ b5 16.cxb5

Black is not afraid of trading off the e6 bishop because the resulting pawn structures will be better due to the bad bishop on e2. 16. $\text{N}g5$ $\text{N}c5$ 17. $\text{N}xe6$ $\text{N}xe6$ =.

16...axb5 17. $\text{N}d3$ b4

Fixing the White queenside.

18. $\text{Q}h6$



The start of a faulty plan. Even without the dark-squared bishop, Black has enough resources to defend. Meanwhile with all the White pieces migrating to the

kingside, the queenside will be left powerless.

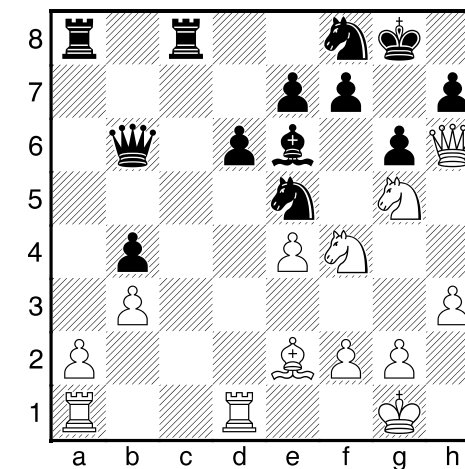
18... $\text{Q}b6$!?

The move that I spent the longest time on in the game. First of all, it clears the a-file for the rook to bear down on the a2-pawn. Secondly, it offers $\text{N}d4$ defensive ideas. Thirdly, in lines where White trades off the e6 bishop, the f-file is opened and the Queen eyes the f2 pawn. Finally, future f2-f4 ideas are stopped.

19. $\text{N}f4$

editor – 19. $\text{N}g5$ $\text{N}f8$ ±=.

19... $\text{N}ce5$ 20. $\text{N}g5$ $\text{N}f8$



The White attack has been stopped and now Black has



Chess Canada Gnome

serious threats with ...♖c2.

21.♖ac1?!

Trying to complicate the position and continue the attack, but at this point it is better just to step back and go on the defense.

21.♘fxe6 fxe6 22.♖d2 ♖c3∞.

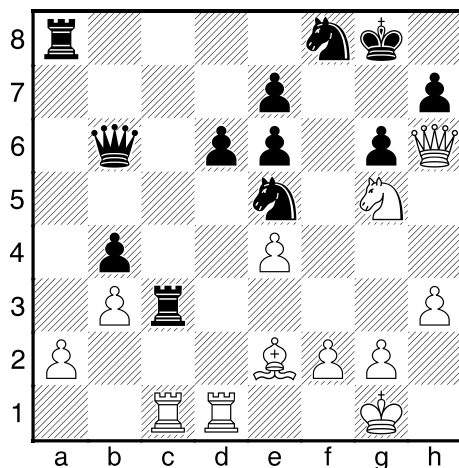
21...♖c3

Nullifying possible tactics and threatening ...♖xa2.

21...♖xc1? 22.♖xc1 ♖xa2?

23.♘fxe6 fxe6 24.♖c8+- and Black gets mated.

22.♘fxe6 fxe6



23.♖xc3?

Now Black is winning; the White queenside is about to collapse and the White pieces are still stuck on the kingside.

23.a4! ♖xb3 24.♙b5 ♖b2 (editor - ♘24...♖c3!) 25.♖f1 ♖∞.

23...bxc3 24.a4 ♖xb3 25.f4 c2 26.♖f1 ♖e3+

1-0

CUCC photos: Brittany Ngo

https://www.facebook.com/pg/WesternChessClub/photos/?tab=album&album_id=979391312160630

Ottawa



David Gordon took advantage of a rare absence from GM Sam-buev to win the Ottawa Winter Open with 4/5. **Armando Valdizon** was second with 3.5, followed by **Svitlana Demchenko**, **Robert Villeneuve** and **Ben Kellar** with 3. *Chess Canda* has the final round board 1 game...

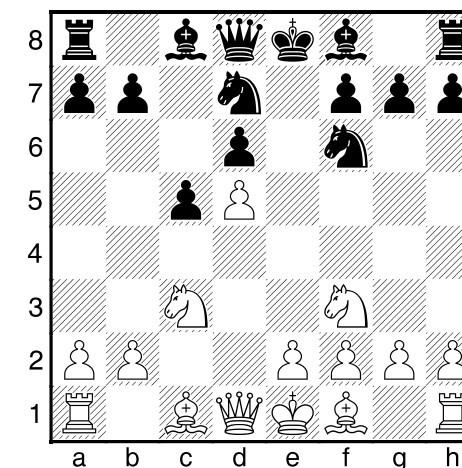
Demchenko, Svitlana (2086)

Gordon, David (2310) A60

Ottawa Winter Open (5), 15.01.2017

Notes by John Upper

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 e6 4.c4 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.♘c3 ♘bd7!?



An unusual Benoni move-order, which can help if White goes for an early ♘d2-c4, but rules out an equalizing option after 7.e4 then ...♙g4.

7.e4 g6 8.♙d3

Black is not applying any pressure yet, so White has other sensible options:

Demchenko v Gordon





Chess Canada Gnome

8.h3 ♔g7 9.♔d3 0-0 10.0-0 ♔e7
11.♖e1 ♖b8 12.a4 a6 13.♙f4 ♘e8
14.♚d2 ♘c7 15.♙f1 ♖d8 16.♖ad1
♘e8 17.♙g5 f6 18.♙e3 ♘e5
19.♘xe5 fxe5 20.a5 b5 21.axb6
♖xb6± (1-0, 59) [Borovikov,V \(2595\)](#)–[Kononenko,D \(2430\)](#)
Rivne 2005.

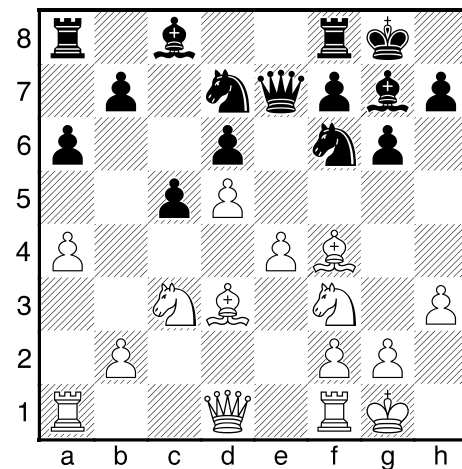
8.♙f4 ♘h5 9.♙g5 ♙e7 10.♙h6
♙f8 11.♙e3 a6 12.a4 ♙g7 13.♙e2
0-0 14.0-0 ♖e8 15.♘d2± (1-0, 46)
[Aleksandrov,A \(2604\)](#)–[Idrisov,T \(2262\)](#)
Nakhchivan 2012.

8...a6 9.a4 ♙g7 10.♙f4
10.0-0 0-0 11.h3 h6 12.♖e1
g5! 13.♘e2 g4! 14.hxg4 ♘xg4
15.♘g3 ♘de5 16.♙e2 f5 17.exf5
♙xf5 18.♘xf5 ♖xf5 19.♖f1± (1-0,
31) [Psakhis,L \(2605\)](#)–[Manor,I \(2475\)](#)
Israel 1992.

10...♔e7

Natural, but Black might be able
to develop without protecting
the d6-pawn; for example:
10...♘g4!? Δ11.♙xd6?! ♖b6↗
12.e5 ♘dx5 13.♙xe5 ♘xe5
14.♘xe5 and Black has model
dark-square play after either
14...♖xb2!? or 14...♙xe5 15.♖e2
♖f6↗ 16.♘e4 ♖d8 17.♘xc5 0-0.

11.0-0 0-0 12.h3

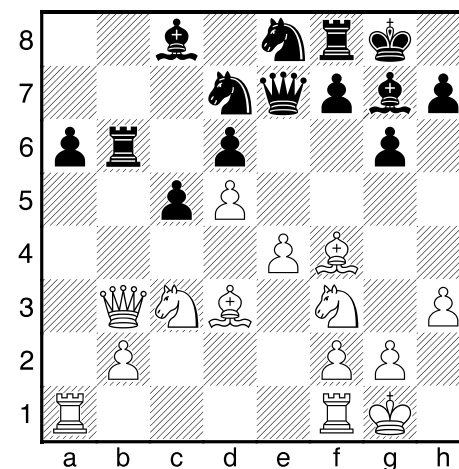


The game has transposed to a
common position. If White has
to play this (to keep the ♙ on the
h2-d6 diagonal when Black plays
...♘h5) then the early ...♘bd7 is
just fine.

12...♖b8

12...♘h5 13.♙h2 ♙h6 14.♖e1:
14...f6 15.a5 ♘e5 16.♘a4 ♙f4
17.♘b6 ♖b8 18.♙f1± (0-1, 34)
[Piket,J \(2615\)](#)–[Romanishin,O \(2595\)](#)
Manila 1992.)
14... ♙f4 15.g3 ♙h6 16.♙f1
♘e5 17.♘xe5 ♖xe5 18.f4
♖d4+ 19.♔g2 ♖b4 20.♖d2 f5
21.e5?! (21.exf5 ♙xf5±) 21...
dx5 22.♖xe5 ♙g7∞ (1-0, 44)
[Shirov,A \(2675\)](#)–[Dubov,D \(2629\)](#)
Moscow 2014.

13.a5N ♘e8 14.♖b3 b5
15.axb6 ♖xb6



The position of Black's ♖b6
could almost stand for the whole
Benoni opening: precarious but
dynamic. It is lost if White can
organize central play (♘c4 or
e4-e5) but makes up for it with
counter-attacking chances on
the dark squares.

It might be worth
mentioning that with White
pawns on d5, e4 and h3 all
covering light-squares, Black
must either aim for piece play
on the dark squares, or a pawn
break on the light squares (with
...f5). Count how many of Black's
next moves are on the dark
squares.

16.♖c2 ♘e5 17.♙xe5 ♙xe5

18.♘xe5 ♖xe5 19.♖a2

Both players now aim their ♘s at
their best squares (c4 and d4).

19...♘c7 20.♘d1 ♘b5

20...f5!? would be a different
way to play, developing the ♖f8
and trying to make the d5-pawn
a target. 21.♘e3 fxe4 22.♙xe4
♖b4∞.

21.♘e3 ♘d4 22.♖d1

22.♘c4 ♘xc2 23.♘xe5 ♘b4
24.♘c4 ♖b8 25.♖a3 ♘xd3!
26.♖xd3 a5 27.♖a1 ♙a6=.

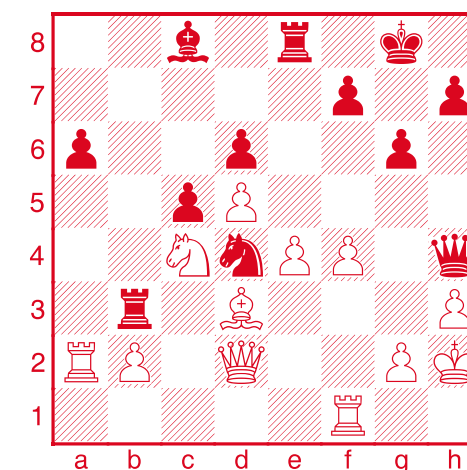
22...♖g5 23.♔h2

23.f4?! ♖g3↑ 24.♖e1?? ♘f3+--.

23...♖b3 24.f4 ♖h4 25.♖d2

♖e8 26.♘c4∞

26.♖a3=.





26...♙xh3!!

The ♙c8 had been developed the whole time!

Of course, this line requires lots of correct calculation, but the clue to finding it comes from [Vukovic's Art of Attack in Chess](#), which said something like: when your pieces control one colour complex, sacrifice on the other colour so you can attack on both.

27.gxh3 ♖xe4!

The point: Black not only gets a second pawn, but threatens ...♖e2+, which brings the ♖b3 into play.

28.♙xe4??

28.♘xd6? ♖e2+!-+;

⬇28.♘e3 ♖xf4? (28...♖e8+ threatening ...c4. Black has two pawns, and an attack for the piece.) 29.♘g2 ♖xd3! 30.♙xd3 ♖f2 ♖xa6 (31.♖xf2 ♙xf2 32.♖a3!) 31...♙f4+?! 32.♙g1 ♘e2+? 33.♙xe2+-;

⬇28.♖a3!= ♖e2+ ♖ (28...♘e2? 29.♙e1 ♖+-) 29.♙xe2 ♖ (29.♙xe2? ♘xe2 30.♙xe2

♙xh3+ 31.♙g1 ♙g3+ 32.♙h1 ♖xa3 33.bxa3 White has more pieces and they are very well coordinated, but her ♙ is exposed and h5-h4-h3 will break their coordination. 33...h5 34.♖f3 ♙e1+ 35.♙f1 ♙e4-+) 29...♙g3+ 30.♙h1 ♙xh3+ 31.♙g1 ♙g3+=.

28...♖xh3+ ♖-+

28...♙xh3+?? 29.♙g1 ♖g3+ 30.♙g2+-.

29.♙g1 ♙g3+ ♖ 30.♙g2

30.♙g2 ♘e2#.

30...♙h2+ ♖ 31.♙f2 ♙g3+=

Black needed only a draw to clinch first place and he forces the draw here; but would have enjoyed his tournament more if he had found this: 31...♖g3!+- 32.♘e3 (32.♖g1 ♖f3+! 33.♙e1 ♙xg1+ 34.♙f1 ♙xf1#) 32...♖f3+! 33.♙e1 ♖xe3+ ♖ 34.♙xe3 (34.♙d1 ♖e2-+) 34...♘c2+ ♖ 35.♙d2 ♘xe3 36.♙xe3 ♙xg2 37.♖d1 h5-+.

32.♙g1 ♙h2+ 33.♙f2 ♙g3+?=

1/2-1/2

Hart House



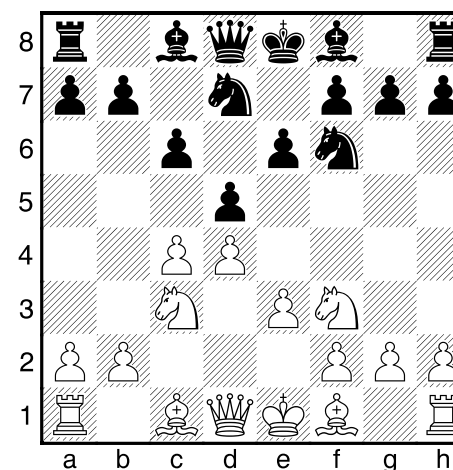
IM Kaiqi Yang won the 2017 Hart House Reading Week Open with 5.5/6 — TPR of 2714! — conceding a draw only to **IM Nikolay Noritsyn**, who was clear second with 5/6. **Yuanchen Zhang** held Noritsyn to a draw in the final round to finish 3rd with 4/6. Others included **IMs Tomas Krnan** 3½ and **Peter Vavrak** 3.

Yang, Kaiqi (2432) Plotkin, Victor (2401)

D45

*Hart House Reading Week Open
Toronto (3), 19.02.2017
Notes by John Upper*

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.d4 d5
4.♘f3 c6 5.e3 ♘bd7



6.♙c2

The most popular anti-Meran move. The ♙ goes to a useful square without conceding a tempo to Black after ♙d3 dxc4.

6.♙d3 dxc4 7.♙xc4 b5 is the start of the very complicated Meran variation of the semi-Slav. Black's resources seem to be at least enough for equality, and so 6.♙c2 has actually become the main move among top players, with only [Mamedyarov](#) showing a clear preference for ♙d3.

6...♙e7

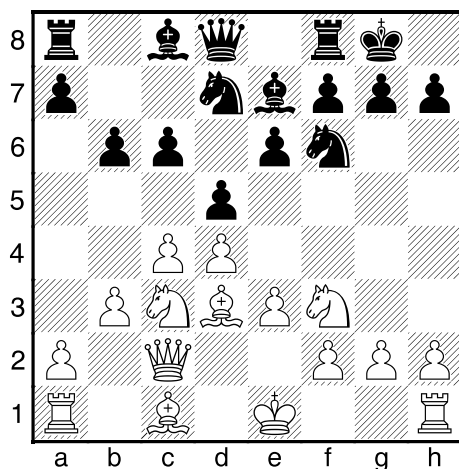
This is not the most popular, but it has been played by Kortchnoi, Vallejo Pons, and other 2600+ GMs. Pros: it's less exposed to attack than on d6 (from e4-e5, or cxd5 then ♘b5). Cons: It doesn't help support ...e5, it occupies a decent square for Black's ♙, and (as we'll see in this game) it can be exposed on the e-file!

6...♙d6 is far-and-away the main move; it and 6...a6 and 6...b6 all score better than ♙e7.

7.b3 0-0 8.♙d3 b6



Chess Canada Gnome



9.e4!?

Before playing this thematic break White usually castles and plays ♖b2... but maybe there's no need to prepare it when Black is so far from being able to strike back in the center!?

Here are some examples of more typical play by White: 9.0-0 ♖b7 10.♖b2 c5! 11.♖e2 ♖c8:

12.♖fd1 cxd4 13.exd4 ♖c7
14.♖b5 ♖b8 15.♖e5 ♖fd8 16.f4
♖f8= (0-1, 39) **Sambuev,B**
(2523)–**Zhigalko,S** (2667)
Istanbul Ol, 2012

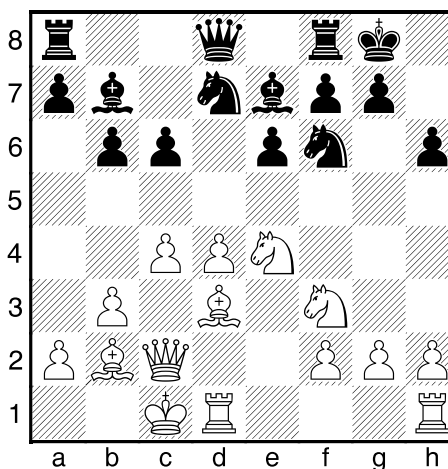
12.♖ac1 ♖c7 (12...♖d6 13.♖fd1
♖e7 14.cxd5 ♖xd5 15.♖e4
cxd4 16.♖xd6 ♖xd6 17.♖xd4±
White has the Bishop pair on

a semi-open board; Weiss,M–
Schlechter,C Vienna, 1896.)
13.♖fd1 ♖b8 14.cxd5 ♖xd5
15.♖xd5 ♖xd5 16.♖b5 ♖fd8
17.e4 ♖b7 18.d5! exd5 (18...♖f8
19.dxe6± fxe6 (19...♖xe6
20.♖d7±) 20.♖e5 ♖a8 21.♖b2±)
19.exd5 ♖d6 20.♖e4 ♖f8± White
has more space, and eventually
squeezed out some concessions
from Black in **Spraggett,K** (2571)
–**Santos,A** (2326) Figueira da
Foz, 2010.

9...dxe4 10.♖xe4 ♖b7 11.♖b2 h6N

11...♖xe4 12.♖xe4 ♖f6 13.♖d3
c5 14.dxc5 ♖xc5 15.♖d1 ♖b4+
16.♖f1 ♖e7 (16...♖h8 17.♖xh7±)
17.♖xf6! ♖xf6 18.♖xh7+ ♖h8
19.♖e4 ♖xe4 20.♖xe4 ♖ad8
21.♖xd8 ♖xd8 22.g3± ♖d1+
23.♖g2 ♖xh1 24.♖xh1± in
Adamski,J (2410)–**Georgievski,V**
(2320) Rzeszow, 1980. Black
has only a little development for
the pawn, since the following
tactic doesn't work: 24...♖a1+?
25.♖g2 ♖xa2 26.♖g5!+- with a
forced mate.

12.0-0-0!?



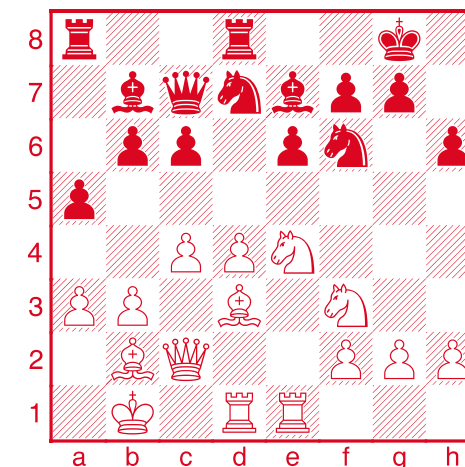
Unusual. White normally castles
short, as you can see from the
games embedded above. But
unless Black can force open the
b or c-files, the white ♖ isn't
in much danger, and Black's
♖s don't make much of an
impression. On the other hand,
Black's ♖h6 gives White a hook
to aim at, and his two ♖s are
already pointed at the Black ♖.

12...♖c7

12...b5!? is the obvious way to
create some play, when 13.c5
concedes d5 but still seems to
keep an advantage:
13...♖d5 14.a3 this keeps
the queenside files closed.
Computers prefer Black, but I'm
not so sure.
13...b4 trying to force open the

a-file, but it looks like White
is faster; e.g. 14.♖xf6+ ♖xf6
15.g4!? and White has the
initiative.

13.♖he1 a5 14.a3 ♖fd8 15.♖b1



Critical Position: ...c5 or ♖xe4

15...c5?!

♖15...♖xe4 16.♖xe4 ♖f6 17.♖d3
c5∞ or 17...b5∞.

16.d5!

A very strong pawn sac.

16...exd5 17.♖c3!

17.cxd5 ♖xd5 18.♖ed2
(18.♖d4!?) 18...♖f8± and Black's
play against the White King
should come first.

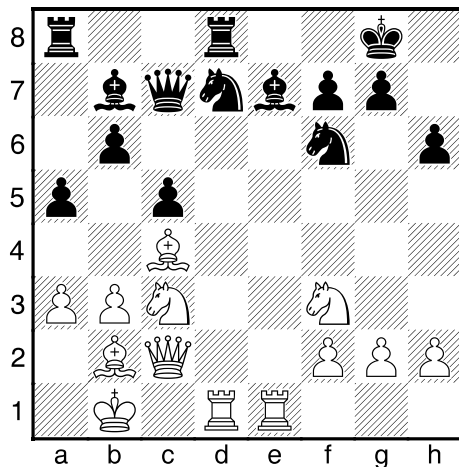


17...dxc4?

17...d4?? 18.♘b5 and the ♔ and ♙e7 are hanging.

17...♙d6 18.cxd5 gives White a space and development advantage, since the d5-pawn can't be taken: 18...♘xd5?? 19.♘xd5 ♙xd5 20.♙h7+- winning the exposed ♙d5.

18.♙xc4



If Black's ♖s were on e8 and d8 then the position would be balanced, but where they are now Black's position may already be beyond saving!

18...♙xf3!

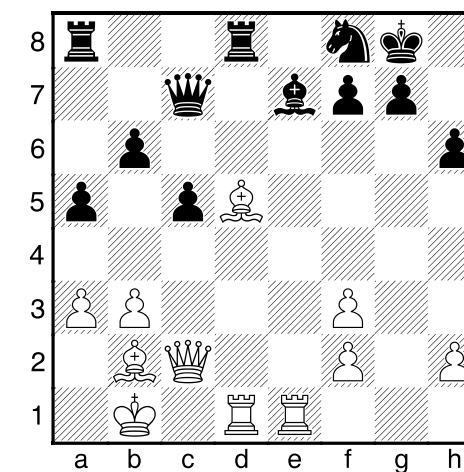
18...♙f8? 19.♔g6!+-;

18...♘f8? 19.♖xd8 ♖xd8



20.♘e5+- wins f7 and the game; e.g. 20...♘d5 (20...♘e6 21.♘xf7+-) 21.♘xf7 ♖xf7 22.♘d5 ♙xd5 23.♔f5+- material will be equal for one ply, then Black will have to give up the exchange to save himself from the light-square attack.

19.gxf3 ♘f8 20.♘d5 ♘xd5 21.♙xd5



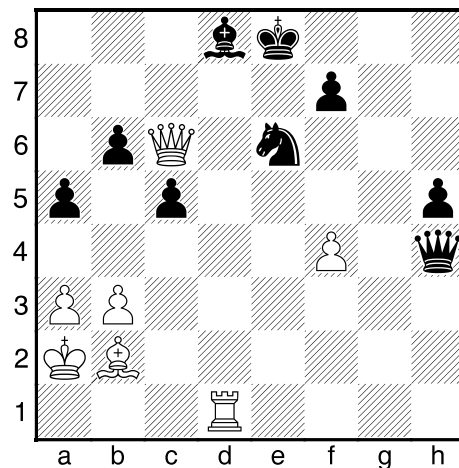
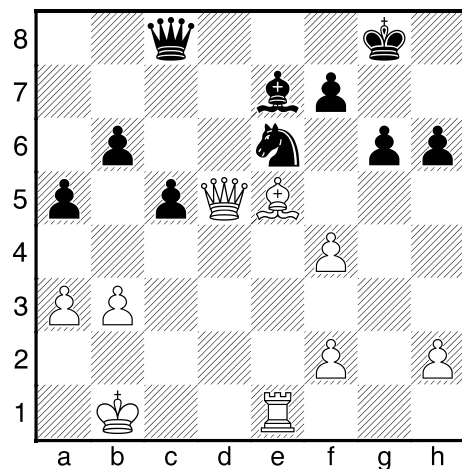
21...♖xd5

21...♖ac8? 22.♖g1+- Black's kingside is toast: 22...♘e6 (22...♘g6 23.♔xg6+-) 23.♖xg7+ ♘xg7 24.♔c3+-.

22.♖xd5±

White is up an exchange for a pawn and with more active pieces.

22...♖d8 23.♔f5 ♖xd5
24.♔xd5 ♘e6 25.♙e5! ♔c8
26.f4 g6



Materially, Black is ahead, with ♘♙♙ for the ♖, but his ♔ is so exposed that there's no way to save the game. In

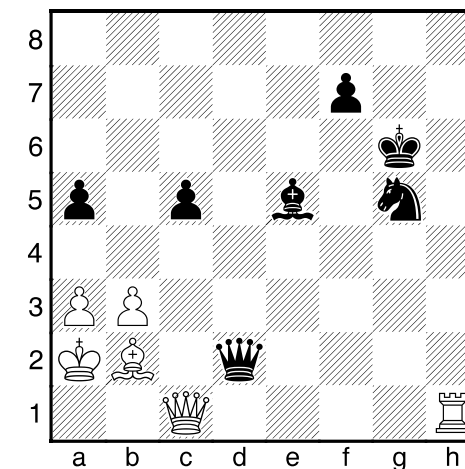
fact, almost 1/2 of White's next 30 moves are checks, which might indicate time trouble, but certainly shows who has the initiative. I've included a few notes the computer rates as improvements, but none of them significantly alter the evaluation: White is winning.

37...♔f8 38.♔a8 ♔e8
39.♔c6+ ♔f8 40.f5! ♘d4!
40...♔g4? 41.♔d6+ defending d1
41...♙e7 42.♔b8+ ♔2.

46.♔h7+ ♔f6 47.♔h6+ ♔f5
48.♔h7+ ♔f6 49.♖f1+ ♙f4
50.♔h6+ ♔f5 51.♔xb6 ♘e6
52.♔b7!

52.♔xa5? ♔e2! 53.♖e1 ♔f2 and the h-pawn gives Black some hope.

52...♔g6 53.♔e4+ ♔g5
54.♔d5+ ♔g4 55.♔f3+ ♔f5
56.♖h1 ♔d2 57.♖xh5+ ♘g5
58.♔h3+ ♔e4 59.♔h1+ ♔f5
60.♔h3+ ♔e4 61.♔h1+ ♔f5
62.♔f1 ♔g6! 63.♖h1 ♙e5
64.♔c1



If Black's ♔ was on e4 then the following exchanges would give decent drawing chances; but so far back it can't support the f-pawn or the weak queenside pawns.

41.♔h6+
♔41.♔d6+
♙e7 (41...♔e8
42.♖g1+-)
42.♔h6+ ♔e8
43.♙xd4 cxd4
44.♔h8+! ♙f8
45.♖c1!+-.

41...♔e7
42.♔h8 ♙c7
43.♔c8 ♔h2
43...♔g3!
44.f6+♠±.

44.♖e1+ ♔f6
♔44...♙e5.

45.♔h8+! ♔xf5

27.f5!+-

Trading a doubled pawn to degrade Black's kingside and open another file for the ♖.

27...gxf5 28.♙b2
♔c7 29.♔xf5
♔xh2 30.♔f3
♔h4 31.♖g1+
♔f8 32.♖h1 ♔g5
33.♔a8+ ♙d8
34.♖d1 h5 35.f4
♔h4 36.♔a2 ♔e8
37.♔c6+

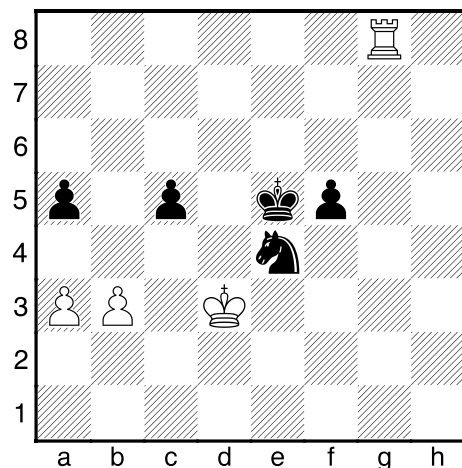


Old School.





64...♔xb2+ 65.♔xb2 ♕xb2
66.♔xb2 ♖e4 67.♔c2 f5
68.♖g1+ ♔f6 69.♔d3 ♔e5
70.♖g8



Stopping the f-pawn (due to ♖e8+) and preparing to win the a-pawn.

70...♔d5 71.♖a8

If Black's c5 pawn was back on b6 this would probably draw, but three isolated pawns are two weaknesses too many.

71...f4 72.♖f8! ♖f2+ 73.♔e2
♖g4 74.♖xf4 ♖e5 75.♖a4
♖c6 76.♔d2 ♖d4 77.♔c3
♖c6 78.♖h4 ♖e5

1-0

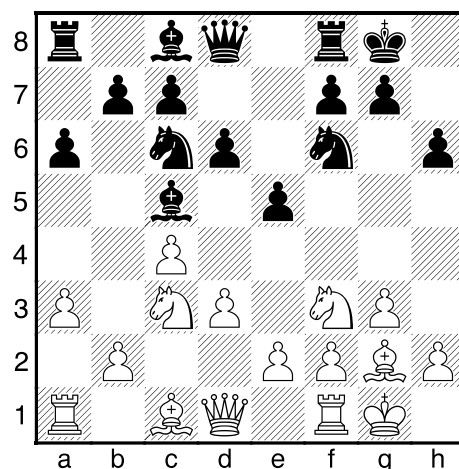
Hua, Eugene (2303) Issani, Nameer (2205)

A20

Hart House Reading Week Open
Toronto (2), 18.02.2017

Notes by John Upper

1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♖f6 3.♔g2
♖c6 4.♖c3 ♔c5 5.♖f3 d6
6.d3 a6 7.a3 0-0 8.0-0 h6



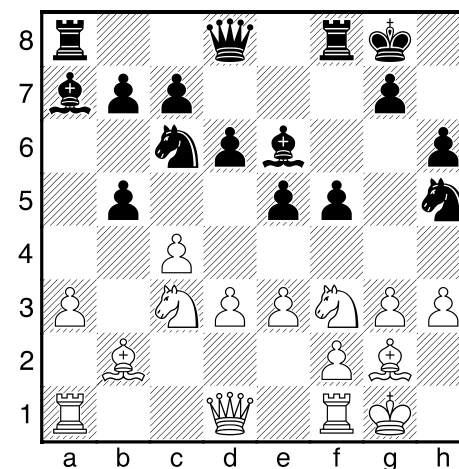
The opening doesn't promise a tactical slug-fest — especially not if White continues in the usual way with e2-e3 and ♖d2, keeping all his pieces behind his slowly-advancing pawn wave — but all the pieces are still on the board, and both of Black's ♕s are pointed at the White ♔.

9.h3

9.b4 ♔a7 10.♔b2 ♖e8 11.e3
♖e7 12.♖d2 (12.d4) 12...♖b8
13.♖de4 ♖g6 14.♖c1 c6 15.c5
♖xe4 16.♖xe4 d5 17.♖d6±
(0-1, 44) [Grischuk,A \(2754\)](#)–
[Carlsen,M \(2857\)](#) chess.com
blitz, 2016.

9...♔e6 10.b4 ♔a7 11.♔b2
11.e3 ♖d7 12.♔h2 ♖e7 13.a4
♖g6 14.♖d2 c6 15.♖ce4 ♖e8
16.c5? d5 17.♖c3 a5 18.♔a3
axb4 19.♔xb4 f5 (19...d4±)
(1-0, 39) [Kuljasevic,D \(2567\)](#)–
[Valsecchi,A \(2407\)](#) Skopje, 2014.

11...♖h5 12.e3 f5 13.b5
axb5



14.cxb5

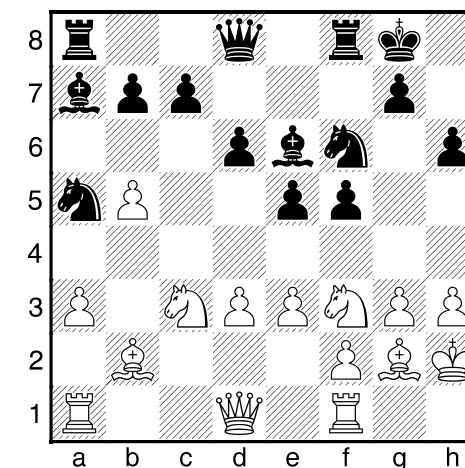
14.♖xb5!? would be an atypical capture — White's b-pawn push is to dislodge the ♖c6 and

extend the power of the ♔g2 — but it leaves White with more pawn presence in the center, and some tempo play against the ♔a7; e.g. 14...♔b6 15.c5!? ♖xc5 16.d4 ♖a7 (16...♔b6 17.d5±) 17.dxc5 ♖xb5 18.a4±.

14...♖a5

14...♖e7?! 15.♖h4 attacks h5 and b7.

15.♔h2 ♖f6



Black can improve his position with central play (...♖d7 and ...c6) or a kingside pawn advance, or both, but I don't see any promising plan for White. It might be objectively best to sit tight with ♖e2, but White lashes out with...



16.d4 e4 17.♘d2 d5

Computers hate this move, which has the effect of making all four ♙s "bad".

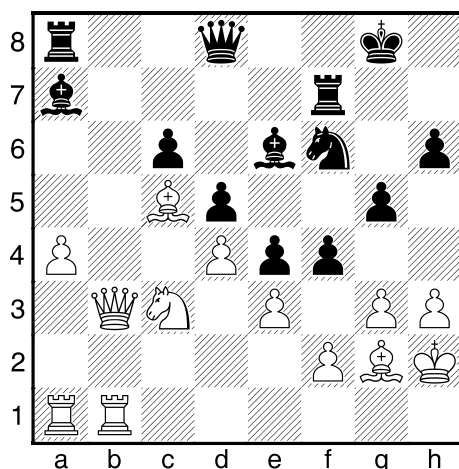
18.a4 c6 19.♙a3 ♖f7

20.bxc6 bxc6 21.♘b3 ♘xb3

21...♘c4! 22.♙c5 ♙b8-+ and suddenly, Black has unstoppable winning threats with ...♘xe3 and ...♘g4+.

22.♙xb3 g5 23.♖fb1? f4

24.♙c5



24...♙b8

♠24...f3! 25.♙f1 h5 Black's pawn storm will tear the roof of White's castle.

♠24...fxg3+! 25.fxg3 ♙b8 threatening ...♙xg3+ then ...♙c7+.

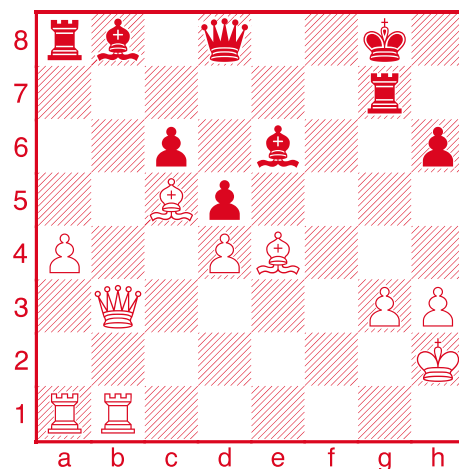
25.exf4 gxf4 26.♘xe4!

♘xe4

26...♘h5! 27.♙d1 ♘xg3!

28.♘xg3 fxg3+ 29.fxg3 ♙xg3+♠+.

27.♙xe4 fxg3+ 28.fxg3 ♖g7!



Black is down a pawn but is threatening g3 and has four pieces pointed at the White ♙. Tactically, both LSBs might come off the board (if Black chooses) and White's ♙ is currently forced to keep the pin on the d5-pawn.

29.♖g1?

29.♖a3♠ a preposterous-looking defensive move, but the best available, and keeps the game alive:

29...♖xg3?? 30.♙xb8♠ ♖xb8 31.♖xg3+♠+;

29...♙xg3+ 30.♙xg3 ♖xg3

31.♖xg3+ ♙h8♠ (not 31...♙f7

32.♖f1+- wins the ♙ for a ♖.).

Materially, Black is ahead, but his exposed ♙ and White's active pieces make it a game.

29...♙c8?

Defends the ♙e6 and so threatens ...dxe4, so it is reasonable, but happens to be bad.

Black has several other reasonable-looking moves, but only one that clearly wins:

29...♙h4?? 30.♙xb8+-;

29...♙c7 30.♙c2!± threatens ♙e3 (forking e6 and h6) and with White's a1-♖ coming to the f-file, after which White will have more pieces pointed at the Black ♙ than vice versa.

29...♙g5! threatens ...♙xh3 then ...♙g4. 30.♖af1♠ threatens ♖f8#. 30...♙c7 defends f8 and renews the threat to h3;

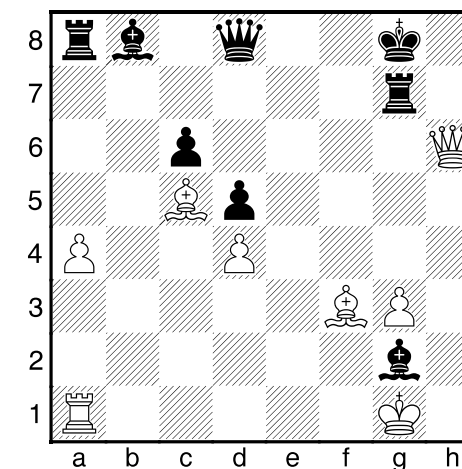
29...♙c7!+- puts the ♙ on a safe square so that ...♙h4 is a killing threat.

30.♙f3 ♙xh3 31.♙e3 ♙f5

32.♖g2 ♙d8 33.♙g1!

Getting off h2 means no check from Black's DSB and no h-file pin after ♙xh6.

33...♙h3 34.♙xh6 ♙xg2



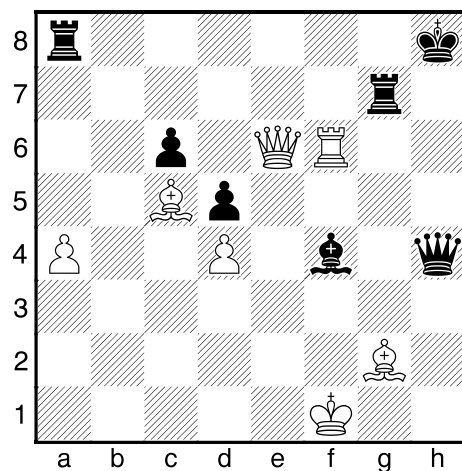
35.♙e6+?

35.♙xg2? ♙d7♠+- (35...♙xg3 36.♙xc6♠);

35.♙g4!! ♖xg4 36.♙e6+♠ ♙h8 37.♙xg4 ♙e4 38.♖f1! threatening ♖f8 and ♖f7. 38...♙xg3♠ 39.♙xg3 ♙g8♠=.

35...♙h8-+ 36.♙xg2 36.♙xg2 ♖xg3+ 37.♙f1 ♖a7-+ (37...♖xf3+?? 38.♙e2=).

36...♙xg3 37.♖f1 ♙h4 38.♖f6 ♙f4 39.♙f1

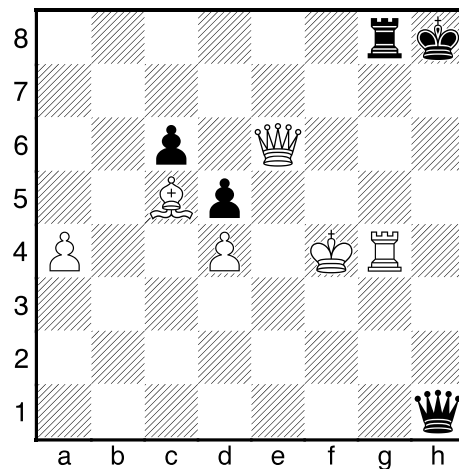


39...Rxb8-+.

39...Rxb8-+.

40.♔xg2= ♖g8+ 41.♖g6□
♔h2+ 42.♔f3 ♔h5+ 43.♖g4

♔h1+ 44.♔xf4



44...♔f1+??

44...♔h2+□= 45.♔e3 ♔h3+
46.♔f2 ♖xg4 (46...♔xg4??
47.♔h6#) 47.♔f6+ ♔h7

48.♔f5+□ and White has a perpetual.

45.♔e5+- ♔e2+ 46.♔f6□
46.♔d6? ♖d8+ 47.♔c7 (47.♔e7
♖e8+-) 47...♔xe6 48.♖h4+ ♔g7
49.♔xd8 ♔f6+ 50.♔e7∞.

46...♔f3+ 47.♔f5□ ♔xg4
48.♔xg4□ ♖xg4 49.a5 ♖g2
50.a6 ♖f2+ 51.♔e6 ♔g7
52.a7 ♖a2 53.♔d7

1-0

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- *GMs Eric Hansen & Aman Hambleton*
- *IM Michael Song*
- *HelmsKnight*

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